

Cult of the Sacred Runes

(神纹道)

Chapter

001-184

Mad Snail

(发飙的蜗牛)

Story Description:

The formless ancient world was infested with despicable demons. They hunted and feasted on mankind, keeping the human civilization constantly in a weak and suppressed state.

During the first known year, a magical mountain descended into the world from the realm of the Gods. Carved on this enormous mountain was a message: 'Heaven Prevails'...

After the Grand Descent, a name that was given to the descending of the mountain, the Three Great Sages made their ways to Mystic Mountain where they learned to harvest what we now call magic, establishing the Mystic Cults and eighty-one sacred shrines to help aid mankind with the cult's mystic powers against the eternal fight to the death with demons.

Original Story can be found here: [Link](#)

Chapter 1: The Mystic Runes and the Mystic Stances

Green Moon Castle: Shrine of the South Star

Spring said its farewell with a session of refreshing rain as Green Moon City welcomed yet another summer.

The temperature was slightly too warm, making the students from all classes in the South Star sleepier than usual, with the exception of junior class three where everyone's eyes were as wide open as possible; they were staring into the center of the classroom where a fifteen or sixteen year old girl dressed in white was making a speech.

"The path of combat is full of obstacles. To rid yourself of your student status, you will need to climb through the star ranks and once you reach ten stars you can then graduate to become a warrior. After the warrior rank, one has to achieve the 'Three Steps of Prime': condensed prime, returned prime, and god's prime. It's anything but simple to achieve any of these three primes. The most talented men who broke through and transcended their primal energy to go beyond god's prime are the 'Supremes' whose duty it is to protect mankind. There have only been thirty-six Supremes throughout the history of mankind but that's not the end of our study of mystic powers. Only when one understands the ways of magic from the universe and can create one's own 'legendary mystic stance', does one truly earn the status of a Sage. However, I am sure we all know how only three people in the history of mankind has reached the level of Sage!"

"We can now master tens of thousands of mystic stances, mystic runes, and 'bone artifacts'. I dare say we really are blessed by the gods... Enough of that, let's talk about mystic runes!"

The white dressed teenager was standing on the podium gazing upon the engaged students with her crystal clear eyes as she was giving the lesson. Her voice, ethereal and elegant like a flowing spring, clear and melodious.

Her name was Lin Zi Yan, student of the 'class of the gifted' in South Star Academy. She was only fifteen years old, but about to become a warrior, some called what she achieved at her age sinister.. Zi Yan learned her craft directly from the vice principal of South Star and it was a privilege for junior class three to have her as a substitute teacher.

“Metaphorically speaking if the mystic stances are letters and words, then mystic runes would be strokes. It's impossible to write without strokes so in order to learn mystic stances one must understand the runes.”

“The ‘Triple Tidal Palm’ is a low level spirit mystic stance consisting of thirty-six basic runes, today I am here to teach you the first three of the thirty-six!”

Zi Yan paced back and forth appreciating the students gratefulness on their faces from the detailed lecture and demonstration. Her purple hair which was glowing had a braid by her ear and she had golden crystal bead decorations in her hair making it appear almost like a shimmering waterfall. She was wearing a classic white long dress that sculpted her upper body like a work of art, her arm, bare below her sleeves, was pale as white jade and on her wrist was a plain silver bracelet. Her elegance was almost indescribable, simplistic yet different, like a fairy lotus on a snow capped summit far away from any impurity of the world.

Understudy of the vice principal, ten star Student, and an aspiring Warrior.. stunning appearances and a mysterious background; all of theses characteristics of Zi Yan caused her to be the focus of admiration for the class..

Mystic runes are a very complex and cumbersome system but Zi Yan wrote them perfectly with ease. She turned around to keep eye contact with the students as she finished the runes, which allowed students to get a glimpse of her neck and collarbone.. Complemented by the shine of the silk dress, like moonlight, it would charm anyone who put their eyes on her.

The junior three class students were around twelve and thirteen years

old; they looked as childish as ever, sitting there respectfully, staring at miss Zi Yan with adoration and admiration. 'Miss Zi Yan is so beautiful!', 'I have to become a warrior to fight by miss Zi Yan's side against the demons!' Were what majority of the boys had in mind. To fight by her side was and would become some of the boys' life goals and impossible dreams.

At the rearmost classroom sat a slightly skinny boy spaced out and not really noticed by the rest of the class. He had very proportional and defined chiseled facial features. Not that handsome, but there is a witty killer look in his eyes that made up for how generic he looked.

The boy, Ye Wei had very low self-awareness and self esteem, did not stand out in class or in family gatherings. The images of disappointed faces of his relatives when they learned Ye Wei's Sentient was red caused only a small facial spasm, this memory every now and then comes to haunt him.

"Mystic runes.. I have no hope of becoming a warrior in this life, why should I even bother learning mystic runes? I have no mastery over my primal energy.. Also I don't really think I can sketch a worthy rune.."

Ye Wei started thinking about the result he had gotten during the last entry test into South Star he took, and he squeezed out a self-deprecating smile from the corner of his mouth. His veins were bulging from holding his fist tight in a rush of frustration.

The sentient sorting system categorised the quality of new students, from red to violet and there were seven levels named after colours of the rainbow. Red being the lowest and coincidentally what Ye Wei had. Thus, the tutors at South Star didn't really expect Ye Wei to be more than a ten star student, and being a warrior was definitely out of the picture.

"Bullied and teased at school and on top of that, nobody in my family is interested in me!" Ye Wei kept self-reflecting. "I would love to be a genius like Miss Zi Yan or a Warrior like my cousin Ye Zhong, the pride of our family. I wish to be admired as well.... why is reality so cruel!!"

Ye Wei carried too much remorse from his underachievements, it built

up so much that he even tried the dangerous 'booming' multiple times, but failed to improve his Sentient. The booming was basically breaking and reforming Ye Wei Sentient.

Several years of penance which ultimately got himself nowhere. This pain was not something ordinary people could endure. Although Ye Wei never gave up and was constantly trying, it was all for naught.

Ye Wei sighed, he could feel a dry taste of bitterness lingering. Instead staring at the old book made of heavy cardboard paper with loose bindings on his table, he drew tornadoes on his desk, unconsciously, without paying attention to the class anymore. The whole book looked dirty and covered with chalk marks.

On the cover of this ancient book was a towering mountain, and the mountain had some kind of carving on it. However, the damage on the book blurred the carving to an unreadable state, but still, the carvings radiated a faint feeling of righteousness.

This rugged ancient book was salvaged from a pile of trash in the Ye family basement. Legend had it that Ye was a very influential family name, and had a deep rooted mystic history with it being a supreme family but the glory was all but submerged under the dust of history and the rise and fall of dynasties..... The present day Ye family was only a second rate, washed up family in the western border town of Green Moon City of the Zhou Dynasty.

Ye Wei carried on procrastinating and started stroking the cover of the ancient book; the kind of roughness his fingertips felt was somehow foreign, both the texture and sensation.

What he wasn't aware of was the fact that a wave of energy was currently entering his body. Starting from the point of contact, like a stone thrown into a body of water, the energy spread and caused ripples on his skin. It surged and headed straight to his brain.

He yawned, a spell of sleepiness hit him hard causing him to close his eyes and in the next instant he was lying on the book deeply asleep.

This was one of those very long dreams. Ye Wei visualized a grand

towering mountain that was green with lush pines and cypresses. If you really looked close enough, you could see millions of figures and lines all over the mountain; they seemed to resemble runic carvings which were moving in a wavelike motion, almost making it seem like the mountain was alive.. All of a sudden the mountain shattered into pieces of flame spitting rocks and before Ye Wei could do anything, one of rocks flew towards him. The mysterious lines on the rock came alive and left the rock to attach themselves onto Ye's head; they immediately started drilling and boring, evolving and transforming into information on different kinds of mystic runes, giving Ye a monumental headache.

The mountain on the rugged ancient book cover disappeared silently....

Soon after, the book itself turned into fine dust, returning to nature with the summer breeze.

Translator Note:

Lin Zi Yan: Means Violet-beauty

Chapter 2: From Dream to Reality

Ye Wei dreamt for a long time: he dreamt about the first year of history, the Grand Descent, about how the Sages surveyed Mystic Mount, about them gaining understanding of the mystic runes and creating three thousand mystic stances, he dreamt about the Sword Master refining demon remains and then forging them into mystic arms, and lastly he dreamt of the Combat Master dictating the mystic scrolls, which were then spread all over the world.

Ye Wei's mind kept wandering as the dream seemed to carry on for centuries.

Meanwhile, Lin Zi Yan was still lecturing and explaining the inner workings of mystic runes. Her lecture was vivid, she tried to make the students understand how much the Three Sages' attributes mean to the world, as they know them. By appropriately referencing some classical volumes she was doing a great job of keeping the attention of the class. Except our one and only Ye Wei.

"Is this kid planning on ever waking up?"

Miss Zi Yan glanced towards the back of the room, her stare clearly expressed how displeased she was with Ye Wei as he had already slept half the lesson away, despite her best efforts to make a bland topic sound relevant and interesting. But all this meant as little to Ye Wei as pearls do to pigs.

Even when Miss Zi Yan is angry, her elegance does not fade. The anger made her elegance even more attractive.

The boys sitting on Ye Wei's left look disgusted by Ye Wei's behaviour, fast asleep in their favourite teacher's class. The disrespect was unbearable for them.

"Ye Wei you are the bloody disgrace of our class, how dare you sleep through Miss Zi Yan's lessons!?"

"Maybe I didn't kick his ass hard enough last time."

The owner of these thoughts was a thirteen to fourteen years old looking teenager, Xiao Qi. Xiao Qi is always cold, it is evident in the way he is staring at Ye Wei right now, in the way he talks to others, and how he keeps a distance between himself and other human beings. Maybe it is due to the fact that he doesn't need anyone. Top of the class, five stars Student, and the son of a South Star Academy senior instructor. Xiao is also an admirer of Miss Zi Yan.

Xiao Qi is gifted, it might have come from his parents, as both of them are senior instructors at South Star. Raised by them two, Xiao's mastery and knowledge over mystic runes exceeded the rest of the class by a modest margin. Miss Zi Yan appreciates and recognises his talents, and on a few occasions she couldn't help but praise him. That boosted Xiao's ego by a mile, which is also the reason why Xiao Qi decided he's the Guardian of Miss Zi Yan. Ye Wei's behaviour contradicts many guidelines in his mind as to how people should behave in Miss Zi Yan's class. Which means... yes Xiao Qi is furious.

Xiao Qi's aggression was beginning to show from his posture. "Oh gosh Ye Wei you idiot. Never learn do you? Falling asleep in THIS lesson in front of Xiao Qi, ha good luck with that!" A few students started gossiping and betting how and when Xiao is going to kick Ye's head in. "Popcorn time!" They thought.

At this point, Ye Wei is still only a one star Student, taking one step forward and two steps back in terms of his training. It takes little effort, if any, for the five star Xiao to beat up Ye.

In regards to star levels the first four are relatively easy to get through and there are no obvious changes to one's body except enhanced stamina. But once a Student reaches five stars, their physique will become way better, the primal energy nourishes the skin and the muscles making it possible for one's skin to become tough as steel under impact. The enhanced muscles will cause one's strength and speed to improve drastically. Xiao Qi being a five star Student and Ye Wei stuck on the first star the distance between them is vast, like the mud on the ground compared to a fluffy cloud in the sky.

Ye Wei sits next to Cao Ning, and they maintain a healthy relationship with each other. They usually help each other out both in and out of class. Seeing the anger Xiao directed towards Ye building up Cao tried nudging Ye, an attempt at waking him up, however it didn't work at all as Ye Wei remained motionless, much like a dead pig.

'The nudge usually works. Bro it's not that I don't want to save you from this one, but you are too far gone...' Cao thought with a wry smile on his face, rolling his eyes a little.

At this point Ye Wei was still stuck in the dream, where an uncountable amount of mystic runes were heading straight to his Sentient filling and overloading it. In the dream Ye Wei wandered into his own Sentient, he could see it changing, undergoing metamorphosis. His Sentient was now showing a hint of gold, with countless mysterious runic patterns circulating.

Has the whole bothersome red Sentient situation changed?

Ordinarily the colour of one's Sentient can only be one of the seven colours of the rainbow, a golden Sentient was unheard of. Ye Wei's Sentient is still mainly red, but a touch of gold is definitely present.

BOOM!!

His Sentient finally expanded, and it's about to crack into pieces.

"ARRGGGHH!"

Ye Wei suddenly woke up, covered in cold sweat panting and gasping for air, and his head was still mildly aching. With a hint of fear lingering on his face, he started rubbing his temple, attempting to shake the headache. His vision started to clear up, and the objects in front of him looked like tables and chairs again as he regained consciousness.

At this point, the whole class had their judgemental eyes set on Ye Wei due to the scream he let out. "Is this Ye Wei guy for real? Let's say we forgive him for sleeping through Miss Zi Yan's class.. The screaming and the nightmares are a bit much!" "This guy is seeking attention or what?" "This daydreaming cretin!" The class started talking. "Ye Wei isn't the

brightest of minds, but usually he's better disciplined in class and didn't put his nose into other people's business. Is he doing this to catch Miss Zi Yan's Attention?" "Oh god, Ye Wei is gonna get into trouble."

A couple of kind hearted students saw Xiao Qi's ashen angry face and started to sympathise for Ye Wei, as they know for sure a beating is coming.

The classroom filled with laughter over Ye Wei's apparent stupidity and also sympathetic sighs. But Ye Wei seemed to be ignoring all of the noise, his eyes showed no emotion, he had a big frown as if he's experiencing great pain.

New knowledge about hundreds of thousands of mystic runes was jumping around in his head, overloading his mind, and trying to become part of his memory. As his mind gradually settled, his eyes stopped darting around erratically and regained focus.

'What was that towering mountain in my dream? What happened to my Sentient?'

'Why did I fall asleep, and why did I have such a ridiculous dream?'

Ye Wei's gaze displayed how lost and incredibly surprised he was about the experience, his mood was also slightly affected by the long dream, and a peace and calmness grew inside him.

Miss Zi Yan had decided to pause her lecture, she is well mannered and patient, she tolerated Ye Wei sleeping through her lecture, but the screaming disrupted her attempt to educate and that was simply just too rude and out of line.

"You, stand up!" She gazed upon Ye, her crisp voice seemed a bit stern.

Ye Wei realised Miss Zi Yan was addressing him so he quickly stood up.

"What's your name?" Zi Yan kept eye contact with Ye, asked with annoyance.

Zi Yan was frustrated, as she enjoys giving lectures and she likes the company of most of these students; she always over prepares for her

lectures and the students usually enjoy how enthusiastic she is with teaching. It was unimaginable that someone would fall asleep in her lectures, but this act of disruption topped the unimaginable.

“Ye Wei!” He replied subconsciously, while slowly raising his head, half of his body didn’t know it was awake. Information was slowly arranging itself in chronological order in his head: ‘This is Lin Zi Yan, one of the best students in the ‘class of the gifted’, South Star Academy, ten star level, soon to be Warrior, kind of a goddess in this academy and our sub teacher for the day.’

Ye Wei looked at her for a couple more seconds, her lilac glazed waist length hair flows in the wind as the fragrance from her hair diffuses across the room waking Ye Wei. “I’m in the middle of a class!” He finally sobered up and realised.

“This kid... hasn’t he woken up yet!?”

Miss Zi Yan looked at Ye Wei observing him. He’s slightly taller than her, slim build. The proportional facial features, and the dreamy eyes displayed a cool and relaxed temperament.

Openly and shamelessly sleeping in class, screaming and disturbing. Zi Yan has great patience, but this goes beyond that.

Although she’s only a substitute teacher for junior three, she gives her all to the job not giving up on a single student. Ye Wei was recognised as a waste of seat in the classroom by many, and teaching him was as hard as building a wall with nothing but mud. Even still Zi Yan cared and was willing to pay extra attention to help him in class.

Giving him one last chance Miss Zi Yan said, “Ye Wei, come up to the podium.”

Chapter 3: The Forbidden Stances

“Is Miss Zi Yan losing her temper?”

“Sleeping through Miss Zi Yan’s class and disrupting with sheer rudeness, how can Miss Zi Yan not be angry?”

“Miss Zi Yan is undoubtedly the most popular girl in our academy, Ye Wei can kiss his life goodbye if her admirers catch wind of this little episode of indiscretion!”

Most of junior three were grinning mischievously, as if they already knew how this story would end, with Ye Wei rotting in a corner.

“Pffft! He had it coming, there is no one he could nor should blame but himself!” Xiao Qi taunted, it was obvious he was enjoying this moment from how much the corner of his mouth curled up.

“Ye Wei right? Have you ever heard of the story of Supreme Chen Feng?” Miss Zi Yan spoke with the utmost sincerity, while keeping eye contact with Ye Wei and sounding elegant as usual. Ye Wei’s talent was almost nonexistent and chances were that he would never become a Warrior in his lifetime, but he is still Zi Yan’s student and she feels that guiding him is her obligation.

“Supreme Chen Feng had nothing more than a red Sentient to work with when he was a teenager, but he didn’t give up, didn’t point fingers, or complain to anyone instead he put his efforts into studying thus understanding mystic runes. He perfected the Evergreen stance, the Raging Bull stance, and also the Blazing Butterfly stance. The year he became thirty he became a household name, a renown Runemaster. Since then he created many mystic stances and in the process he also managed to upgrade his Sentient, from red to blue. Ultimately, he was able to become a Supreme!”

“Your Sentient isn’t something set in stone. By practicing, perfecting, and creating mystic stances one can resonate with nature. This ultimately yields energy from the cosmos which acts as a distiller, it cleanses and refines thus upgrading the Sentient!”

That being said creating and perfecting stances is easier said than done, only a handful of prestigious Runemasters are capable of such a feat, ordinary souls don't stand a chance.

Runemaster is a class above Warrior. As the title suggests they are extremely proficient at the art of mystic runes; they can refine them, create them, and they can even inscribe mystic scrolls. The power of a Runemaster is sought after by powers, governing bodies, and the rich and evil. To have a Runemaster on one's side often means winning wars and conquering nations.

There is only one Runemaster at South Star Academy, and he is none other than the vice principal. Although the principal and the school board had more power over administrating the academy, these people with fancier titles had the utmost respect for the vice principal.

The reason Runemasters are so highly valued is because of how truly rare they are!

First, Runemasters needed to master three hundred and sixty thousand basic mystic runes, of which every basic rune has its own complexities and properties. Therefore it's basically impossible to master them if one was talentless, even if you spend your whole life studying.

Furthermore mastering three hundred and sixty thousand runes is just the bare fundamentals of becoming a Runemaster. Soul sensitivity is the key to feeling mystic runes allowing one to find flaws, or just ways to improve runes. The stronger one's soul sensitivity is the more powerful the runes one can create and refine. One can only become a Runemaster by having satisfied these harsh and strange requirements, that is where their prestige and powerful status comes from.

"Supreme Chen Feng?"

Ye Wei slowly nodded listening to Miss Zi Yan's mild scolding, which was kind of heartwarming. He had been sleeping and shouting in class and his punishment for the offences was a motivational story.

"The path to mastery is through practice, it's never too late to start. Let's see how well you know these three mystic runes."

Miss Zi Yan turned ever so slightly towards the blackboard, with her slender fingers she pointed at the three mystic runes she drew on the blackboard. As she turned, the neck opening on her white gauze dress exposed her extremely delicate collarbone and looking at her from the back made her look even slimmer. Her long hair hung like a classic looking curtain in an ancient castle. The top half of her dress was a tight fit, contouring her body, highlighting her curves.

“Ye Wei was fast asleep, like a pig, when Miss Zi Yan was describing the properties of these three runes. There was no way he could recognise what they were, let alone how they worked.”

“He’s basically so dumb that even if the runes were flowing inside him, he wouldn’t be able to tell whether it was an itch, or a rune in his body!” A couple of mouthy students whispered jokingly in mocking tones.

Sitting on the other side of the room we have Xiao Qi with a twisted playful grin on his face. The grin caught Ye Wei’s attention as he groaned. Xiao Qi’s and his personalities were a monumental mismatch and furthermore he was only a mere one star Student unlike Xiao who was a five star, we can all imagine how well these two get along and how much they have in common.

The thought of having to be treated like dirt by despicable characters such as Xiao Qi is getting less and less appealing to Ye Wei!

He took a deep breath and raised his head to look at the three basic runes on the blackboard. Out of nowhere was a spark of inspiration, the runes felt familiar almost like they were flowing in his bloodstream.

Ye Wei blurted out: “These three mystic runes are from the rune set Water Seal, the set itself contains seventy-two runes and are all water type runes. These three runes are used in low level spirit stances like the Triple Tidal Palm, Fist of the Oscillating Waves, Water Parting Finger, and Condensating Palm among others.

“The most used stance that uses these three mystic runes should be the mid Spirit level Ice Mirror Seal!”

His eloquent speech on runes and stances surprised even himself,

“When did I learn all this?”. The winding runes glimmered faintly in Ye Wei’s Sentient, as he was talking about them.

As Ye Wei’s little speech echoed in the classroom, all the student were shocked. Everyone stopped what they were doing, their eyes wide open, looking at Ye Wei stunned into disbelief.

Was Ye Wei actually right?!

“How is this possible?”

Xiao Qi too was stunned, he couldn’t even comprehend how Ye Wei could possibly understand the three runes Miss Zi Yan was talking about while he was asleep!

“Not bad!” Miss Zi Yan looked Ye Wei right in his eyes as she praised him. ‘Seems like he wasn’t asleep for the whole thing, maybe he was listening half awake and picked up a thing or two.’

Upon hearing this praise, Ye realised that the knowledge on runes he had learned in his dream was real! And this dream might be related to that magical book, which, strangely, now was nowhere to be seen.

Inside his Sentient there were countless runes flowing around shimmering in a golden hue.

“Pffft, mystic runes are way more complicated than that? I bet this idiot won’t be able to answer if Miss Zi Yan digs deeper with her questions! It was just dumb luck.” Xiao Qi was trying so hard looking at Miss Zi Yan trying to send her a telepathic message, “Ask him more questions!” hoping Ye Wei would make a fool of himself answering them.

Miss Zi Yan got the signal as she chuckled and asked, “So how many runes are used in Fist of the Oscillating Waves? That I went through that in class just now?”

“Sixteen.”

“How about Water Parting Finger?”

“Twenty-one!”

Ye Wei answered with great fluency.

It was out of everyone's imagination that Ye Wei knew enough to answer these questions, and everyone in class was looking at each other in awe. He couldn't have picked up this much before he fell asleep. Everyone was guessing he studied previously and learned before attending today's lecture, as there was no way he could have learned all this from Zi Yan's teaching while he was fast asleep having a nightmare.

What they didn't know was Ye Wei did learn all of that during his sleep. And how much he learned was completely beyond their imagination!

As Zi Yan was looking at Ye his relaxed posture displayed a sense of indifference. She wanted to test his rune knowledge further and see what level he was on. She blinked and asked him the next question with a smile on her face: "How many mystic stances can one compose with these three runes?"

The spotlight was on Ye Wei again, as everyone in class looked to him wanting to see what his answer would be, as the questions Miss Zi Yan just asked was not covered in the lecture. Even the students who were paying full attention wouldn't be able to answer it, let alone the clueless Ye Wei who slept through the lecture.

"I don't see anyone else in junior three other than myself and Miss Zi Yan who could provide an answer." Xiao Qi laughed at Ye Wei, as he took a nice deep breath holding his head high. With pride he scanned the classroom feeling superior to the rest of the flock, his eyes finally settling on Miss Zi Yan. He was looking forward to basking in the glory of answering the questions when Ye Wei finally chokes So he could gain even more presence in Miss Zi Yan's heart.

Xiao Qi's parents are senior class instructors at the academy, and when it comes to knowledge on runes, it's safe to say Xiao Qi is the best in class!

"There are in total thirty-eight low level spirit stances, twelve mid level spirit stances, and six high spirit stances that consist of these three runes!" The pressure of being the centre of attention did not make Ye Wei hesitate, with his eyes on Miss Zi Yan, he answered calmly and with

certainty.

“Nonsense!”

“Ye Wei can you please just keep it shut if you don’t know the right answer? People are trying to learn in this class and you are not helping!” Xiao Qi stood up with intensity, looking down on Ye Wei showing nothing but contempt, meaning every word he said hoping it would teach Ye Wei a lesson.

Xiao Qi has been waiting to let his frustration out, now he feels relieved.

“Oh Ye doesn’t know what he is talking about!”

“I’d have guessed Ye had it right judging by how calm he looked.”

“Ye Wei is definitely a confident man!”

Xiao Qi is the best student in junior three, both in real combat and rune knowledge his level is way beyond the others. Now that Xiao is calling Ye’s bluff, everyone in class believed Ye was talking trash and therefore started judging him.

“Ye Wei, may I educate you with the correct answer?! There are thirty-six low level spirit stances, ten mid level spirit stances, and five high level spirit stances that are made up by the three runes we just went through in class!” The sneer on Xiao Qi’s face was ice cold, as he stared at Ye Wei with pride. ‘I am second to none in this class when it comes to rune knowledge!’ He thought.

Surprisingly though Miss Zi Yan did not correct Ye Wei, instead she looked at him with her crystal clear eyes.

“Xiao Qi is not wrong.” Zi Yan slowly said.

Xiao Qi instantly became proud of himself after Zi Yan’s approval. While staring down Ye Wei with a playful glare. You have nothing on me Ye Wei, you piece of trash.

Zi Yan wasn’t finished! “But Ye Wei is correct too!”

At this point everyone in class was shocked. “How can they both be

right?”

Zi Yan looked at Ye Wei showing a hint of curiosity: “Some stances take a big toll on the practitioner’s bodies and minds as such they are listed as forbidden. If you count those in Ye Wei was correct!”

The classroom went completely quiet.

The forbidden mystic stances were documented then archived in the academy court, which is only accessible to Warriors and even they don’t always have success with them, where on earth did Ye Wei learned about the forbidden stances?

Chapter 4: Triple Tidal Palm Technique

“How could this be? There is no way on earth Ye Wei knows about the forbidden stances, these have to be wild guesses!” Xiao Qi was not pleased. His crazy eyes staring at Ye with rage and jealousy, as this was the first time he had been outshined in junior three.

And right in front of Miss Zi Yan!

This undermined his confidence like a face-numbing slap!

Zi Yan was evaluating the situation; if he got one of the answers correct it might have been luck, but three times out of three? The probability of him being that lucky was too low to even count. Her irises were black resembling shining onyx and they held great clarity, but the way she was looking at Ye Wei conveyed obscurity.

“Ye Wei, may I ask where exactly you gathered information about forbidden techniques at? How they can be formed into thirty-eight low level spirit stances, twelve mid level ones, and six high level ones?”

Zi Yan herself would have had the same answer as Xiao Qi. Thirty-six low level spirit stances, ten mid level spirit stances, and five high level spirit stances could be composed by combining the three runes that she mentioned earlier in the lecture. She thought that was true until recently when she had a chat with the vice principal about the Glacier rune set. During which he unintentionally mentioned forbidden stances, from there she did some research on them.

Ye Wei, an ordinary student from junior three, South Star Academy, should not possess such knowledge.

When passing on knowledge to students, tutors will never mention forbidden techniques, and most teaching materials will not mention forbidden techniques either. Only the Mystic Technique Encyclopaedia published by the Holy Conservatory, that has been amended twenty-eight times, contains this information about forbidden techniques.

Mystic Techniques Encyclopaedia is the most detailed archive of

research from every corner of the vast world, from every corner of every continent. The depth of the research is so detailed it turns away the vast majority of potential readers, who are mostly talented scholars with exceptional understanding of runes and stances. The seventy-two book collection which is more than ten million words long is seen as an obstacle for the handful of dedicated researchers that study it. Sadly most of these souls finish taking their last breath without ever getting close to finishing the collection.

“Miss Zi Yan, it’s just a matter of experience. The more you read, the more knowledge accumulates in your mind and one’s educated guesses become more and more accurate. That’s how I knew the answers...” Ye Wei shrugged casually, as he answered Miss Zi Yan’s question.

This unbelievable exchange of words between Miss Zi Yan and Ye Wei was echoing in the student’s minds and now all eyes were on Ye Wei. They were wondering how Ye became so proficient on rune knowledge, and how he also knew about the otherwise unheard of forbidden techniques!

“Is this really Ye Wei standing in front of us? The supposedly inadequate waste of space with red Sentient?”

This thought was shared by the whole class, the prejudice slowly dissolved, replaced by admiration.

Xiao Qi tightened his fist, staring at Ye again with extreme prejudice. ‘So he knows a thing or two about runes, what of it? It’s not like he’s ever going to become anything useful. He can’t rub the red off his Sentient, and he will never ever become a Warrior!’

‘Gaining the attention of the class in one lecture does not grant you bragging rights for a lifetime, you’re still merely a one star Student, and I will get you back very very soon!’ He sat himself down, attempting to calm his aggravated self as his authority in class is being challenged.

Ye Wei’s Sentient is red, but if he could familiarise himself with rune knowledge, maybe he would have an extremely slim chance of becoming a Runemaster! He can try to follow Supreme Chen Feng’s footsteps,

creating basic stances and little by little gain energy from the cosmos, therefore refining his Sentient.

An assumption appeared in Miss Zi Yan's mind, 'Maybe Ye Wei is not hopeless at practising martial arts, perhaps he stayed up too late reading about runes? That would explain why he fell asleep during the lecture. Maybe he's walking the path of becoming a Runemaster?'

This idea raised Miss Zi Yan's heartbeat. It is way more of a feat to train a Runemaster than to train a Warrior, it would be a hundred times more satisfying.

'To become a Runemaster, soul sensitivity is of utmost importance... Let's see what he's got!'

Miss Zi Yan raised her head, excited.

"Look at this stance!"

Zi Yan waved her slender hand. Invisible will-force condensing on the tip of her index finger, primal energy flowed from her dantian to her fingertips, merging with the will-force like ink onto a quill tip. And with her finger as a pen she drew the thirty-six runes in the air.

The complex and winding runes tangled together in a systematic way, forming a pattern that resembles offshore tides. Multiple hefty waves of force erupted from Zi Yan's hands with a faint sound of crashing waves, echoing in the classroom. The students could almost smell the saltiness of the sea alongside the force of the rushing tide.

When performed to its full potential in real combat, the force of the rushing tide comes in waves, when the first wave impacts the target it creates a small vacuum, drawing the next wave towards the point of impact. The momentum this technique creates therefore ramps up and become stronger, as long as the dantian of the practitioner is not empty.

Unmistakably, it's the low level spirit mystic stance, Triple Tidal Palm!

The class is looking at the rushing tide patterns in front of Miss Zi Yan. The excitement make the early teenages look even younger than they are.

“Mystic stance, that was a mystic stance!”

Seven stars is usually the break point when Students start to have enough Qi in their dantian to support a stance, a point nobody in the junior class has yet reached. Even Xiao Qi, the best student here is merely at five stars and incapable of performing a stance. Seeing something out of their reach, the class is electrified from Miss Zi Yan displaying a stance.

“What do you think of this?!”

Miss Zi Yan cast Ye Wei a fiery glance, expecting to be impressed. What the class did not know was that this was a spirit sensitivity test for the celebrity of the day; while executing the stance, she intentionally left a flaw, reducing the power of her Triple Tidal Palm to one third its potential.

“Something is off!”

Unlike rest of the class, Ye Wei was not impressed. He frowned a little as his mildly suspicious eyes set on three specific nodes of the thirty-six runes drawn by Miss Zi Yan.

‘There are three distinct mistakes in your stance!’

‘Miss Zi Yan is a ten star elite from the gifted class, performing low Spirit level stances like Triple Tidal Palm should be a walk in the park, how could she make such simple mistakes?’

Ye Wei is confused but he smelled something fishy, for Miss Zi Yan to make three mistakes is simply ridiculous. He does not know what a perfect Triple Tidal Palm looks like, but this just felt imperfect, on a deeper level it even felt wrong, especially those three nodes!

What Ye Wei did not know was Miss Zi Yan intended to commit only one mistake while performing, not three!

“Miss Zi Yan...”

Ye Wei hesitated, not knowing for sure if his soul sensitivity was being tested, therefore unsure if he should point out the errors in her stance in

front of the whole class.

After all it's not very dignifying getting corrected by none but her own student, in front of the whole class!

"What's the matter? Just tell us!" Miss Zi Yan could sense Ye's hesitation, as an attempt to encouraging him, she put a heart-warming smile on her face and patted his shoulder gently.

The encouraging look of Miss Zi Yan only inches away from Ye Wei's own, a faint hint of her fragrance picked up by Ye Wei's nose, his face got a bit warm and he started blushing. He grinded his teeth then finished pondering. With certainty he pointed at one of the three 'flawed' nodes and started speaking: "This node... It is obstructing your qi flow, I'm guessing you could have gotten more out of Triple Tidal Palm if your qi flowed smoother, Miss Zi Yan..."

Chapter 5: Soul Perception

Ye Wei was trying to keep his voice down, but it was still clear and loud enough for everyone in the classroom to hear. After a brief moment of complete silence, mocking laughter broke out from everyone and filled the classroom.

“Hahaha! Is this some kind of joke? This one star level, the last in class is criticising Miss Zi Yan, pinpointing which nodes are wrong with her Triple Tidal Palm?”

“Haha! Boy, you are far in over your head now!”

“Just because Miss Zi Yan asked you for your opinion doesn’t mean that you can say anything. You can’t even perform a stance yourself, what would you know about performing a stance?” The class ridiculed Ye Wei ruthlessly.

“It’s obvious that you have read a couple of books, but you ought to know your limits. For example, speaking out against an elite student, from the class of the gifted, is crossing the line.” Xiao Qi’s upper lip curled up in disdain, slowly forming a sadistic smile. “What an absolute loser, Miss Zi Yan’s stance being flawed? Please...”

‘Let’s take a gigantic step back, even if Miss Zi Yan’s stance was not completely perfect, you do not point it out in front of the whole class that boldly. This is really humiliating for Miss Zi Yan, regardless whether she is right or not. Ye Wei you cretin, can you stop testing her temper?!’

Xiao Qi gleefully smiled, thinking: ‘This should do it. Ye Wei should be dead to Miss Zi Yan after this incident.’

The class could not believe their ears when they heard what came next!

Miss Zi Yan’s mind went blank for a moment.

“Well said!”

She is having trouble processing all of this, then praised Ye Wei generously, looking at his face as if she had just discovered a diamond in the rough.

Contrary to what Xiao Qi's thought, Miss Zi Yan became more happy than mad.

Zi Yan deliberately made a mistake to test Ye Wei's soul sensitivity. He felt the abnormality in the Qi flow. She was if anything obviously more happy than angry.

Such sharp soul sensitivity from a one star Student, it is indeed impeccable! Ye Wei is good for something after all, if some resources are spent on him, he could really become something. Even if his path does not lead him to becoming a Warrior, becoming a Runemaster is still a possibility!

In Green Moon City, every one in ten Students becomes a Warrior, but not even one in ten thousands could become a Runemaster! There are only three people in the entire Green Moon City that are qualified to have the title Runemaster in front of their name!

Other than creating stances themselves, by identifying flaws and imperfections with their excellent soul sensitivity, Runemasters can help others refine and improve their runes and stances, the relationships between Runemasters and the fighters they service are symbiotic as the services help Runemasters getting onto guestlists of the finest gatherings hosted by influential people.

Lin Zi Yan took a deep, deep breath, trying to keep herself calm. But despite her best efforts, the smile on her face showed joy and excitement: "How would you improve it?"

The fact Ye Wei can point out where the flaws are indicates that his soul sensitivity is way more developed than other Students his age.

'Should I tell Miss Zi Yan how I think it should be done?'

Ye Wei frowned, he has an idea of how to soothe the flow, but he is hesitant. Seeing that the class was already in shock, a lot of questions would be asked. If he is right, how is he suppose to explain the way he gained this knowledge and these abilities? He's not planning on telling anyone about the towering mountain and what he experienced, that is if he could even put it all into words. What if he gets it wrong? Then he will

be devoured by the enemy he just made... The bottom line is that he does not want to draw any more attention to himself.

“Ah! So Miss Zi Yan did that on purpose. Still... how did Ye Wei spot the flaw?” A handful of students looked at Ye Wei, and started discussing pausing throughout the discussion shaking their heads, not exactly certain as to how he could know this.

Being a Students at South Star, the fundamentals of the mystic techniques and applications of them are taught to the young. Even if they are only in the junior class, they know what Ye Wei’s ability to spot flaws in mystic stances could imply...

It means Ye Wei’s soul sensitivity is exceptional, that he is able to feel the flow of primal energies in stances and therefore the flaws where the flow is uneven.

Xiao Qi clenched his fist even tighter, his nails digging into his palm. His bloodshot eyes struggling to focus on anything. He’s spending all his energy trying to convince himself what just happened was a fluke, but the the jealousy within him was just burning hotter as the evidence suggesting otherwise built up.

‘No! This is impossible! Ye Wei definitely does not have what it takes to become a Runemaster...’

‘This happens but even a hungry blind cat can get lucky and walk into a dead mouse sometimes. We’ll see what happens next Ye Wei, luck can only get you so far! You are garbage! Infamous garbage known to all in South Star Academy, how can you possibly have what it takes to become a Runemaster?’

Xiao Qi was well aware of what would happen next if Ye Wei does have what it takes... Even if his Sentient is the worst, as red as a plump cherry tomato, being a Runemaster means the capability of harvesting cosmic energy, which can help upgrade ones Sentient! And if he gets trained as a Runemaster, characters like the vice-principal, the principal, and others on the school board are going to recognise him as an asset to the academy.

From a piece of garbage to a potential Runemaster in one lecture, Xiao Qi can not accept this cinderella story, nor how Ye Wei might become more feared and respected than he is by the class and the rest of South Star.

‘Ye Wei actually might make it as a Runemaster... I bullied him quite often in the past... Is he going to seek revenge?’ One of the tall built bullies looked concerned and anxious, imagining the ways Ye Wei could get him back. He quickly opted to apologise sincerely to Ye Wei after the lecture.

The wrath of a Runemaster can be gruesome, apart from worsening the target’s future, it could affect his/her family’s reputation for generations!

“Xiao Qi you short-sighted bastard, if it wasn’t for you I wouldn’t have been mean to Ye Wei. Now what am I going to do?” The tall bully mumbled.

After displaying his soul sensitivity, Ye Wei’s image in the minds of his classmates was updated. His social status had risen, overtaking Xiao Qi.

Best Student in junior three? Five stars level? Your parents are tutors of the senior classes? Get this Xiao Qi, all of this will means nothing if we have a Runemaster in our class! The social dynamics in the class has been shaken and it is slowing changing... And that tells us a lot about what kind of respect being a Runemaster gets you, merely displaying the potential of becoming one basically won Ye Wei the hearts of the class!

A handful of girls who had been ignoring Ye Wei for as long as they could remember, started to appreciate Ye Wei’s looks. For them, his facial features changed slightly, reassembled a more fanciable Ye Wei.

It is not a secret that Ye Wei’s family are not nobles, but as things look right now, if Ye shows more talent, it would not be long until a Runemaster notices him. And being an apprentice Runemaster does open doors, granting him and his family a few privileges.

Standing on the podium, Ye Wei is feeling the tension he created and the attention that came with it. He smiled, not because he is happy, just to be polite. Reluctant to deal with the situation, he shook his head, the

few girls who were starting to fancy him were looking at him, fishing for eye contact with their flirty eyes. However, Ye Wei showed no interest.

Ye Wei is familiar to seeing the change of social dynamics when people think they can take advantage of a particular person. That is why he is felt a bit dejected. He was hoping that the people he trusted before this lecture would not change their minds about him and would continue to hang out with him, and not do so for the wrong reasons.

Ye Wei now remembered what his father once told him: “When you’re doing well, all people around are opportunists, but it’s when you are in a bad position in life then you know who your real friends are, who are genuinely fond of you and would support you for who you are.”

Real friends will never belittle you when you are feeling down.

Seeing as how Ye Wei still hasn’t suggested ways to correct the flaw, Miss Zi Yan thought it was the end of the ride. To be fair, refining stances is a difficult if not impossible task for any Student, let alone for Ye Wei who is merely a one star Student. Being able to sense the hiccups does indicate Ye Wei has some sort of talent, but it was still not safe enough to say he would become a Runemaster from the little information Zi Yan gathered.

If Ye Wei can briefly point out what in the stance could be polished, Miss Zi Yan might start to consider other ways to train Ye Wei.

Mastering rune knowledge, sensing flaws and mistakes in stances are the basics, a Runemaster’s value is in their abilities to refine and create stances.

‘If Ye Wei is capable of refining this stance, by definition, would Ye Wei be a Runemaster?!’ Miss Zi Yan overthought. ‘No, I should not think too far ahead, Ye Wei has shone more than enough. He can learn how to refine stances in the future, let’s do this one step at a time.’

Chapter 6: Three Mistakes

“Ye Wei, Miss Zi Yan would very much like you to try and suggest how the stance can be improved.” She tried to push him again for an answer, waiting to be surprised and see just how much he knew.

“Erm... about that...” Not willing to give up anything, Ye Wei was trying to stall as much as possible.

Dong~ Dong~ Dong~

As Ye Wei struggled to deal with the situation, the muffled chiming of the school bell interrupted him.

Finally, the lecture is over!

Ye Wei felt relieved as the school bell saved him. He smiled at Lin Zi Yan, scratching the back of his head and saying, “Miss Zi Yan, since the lecture is over, what do you say to resuming this discussion next time?”

Ye Wei knew that his statement would end this drama, as Zi Yan was just a substitute teacher and it was uncertain the next time she would be teaching junior three’s class.

“Class dismissed.” Miss Zi Yan ended the lecture. “Not you, Ye Wei. You are coming with me!” Judging from the soul sensitivity Ye displayed earlier, Zi Yan was pretty certain Ye Wei had potential; as such, she would arrange for Ye Wei to meet one of the Runemasters for further assessment.

Ye Wei really thought he got away with this one, but Miss Zi Yan had other plans. He could not refuse an order from her and therefore followed her out of the classroom, reluctantly.

As soon as the two were out of sight, the class engaged in an intense discussion. Gossip and chatter filled the room.

“His senses are so sharp! I didn’t expect that from Ye, that guy has no talent for fighting, whatsoever...”

“Where is Miss Zi Yan taking him to? Probably to a Runemaster to

verify if the show he put on was genuine? If that was real he'd probably start studying under a master!"

The class was as envious as they were curious. They always looked down on Ye Wei because of his Sentient, but with Ye's newfound talent, the tables were slowly turning.

Cao Ning and a couple of Ye Wei's real friends were genuinely happy for him and a bit jealous at the same time, like everyone else.

"Shut up! All of you!" Xiao Qi slammed the table with a heavy strike, the veins on his arms bulging. Having the spotlight taken off him was hard enough, but taken by someone he had been abusing, someone he deemed inferior, was something way more humiliating. Xiao Qi was drowning in envy; he couldn't deal with the sudden debut of Ye's apparently new talent.

Frustrated and envious, Xiao Qi was in denial. "It can't be true... Why don't I have greater soul sensitivity? Why can't Miss Zi Yan only look at me?"

Lin Zi Yan was only fifteen years old and she was already a ten star Student, one step away from becoming a Warrior. When it came to her appearance, she was impeccable. Her soft, pretty face, graceful posture, and perfectly proportioned body... In the whole student body of South Star Academy, there were no more than three boys who were attractive and smart enough to match her. That list of three of course excludes Ye Wei, who was unknown until today!

Lin Zi Yan was a gentle and friendly person, but anyone who knew her well enough knew that when she talked to people she liked, she kept a bit of distance to protect herself. Now she was walking close to an unfamiliar face. It drew a lot of attention and eyes, and many people wondered who exactly was walking behind Zi Yan.

Feeling the intensity of everyone's gazes, Ye Wei realised becoming close to Zi Yan would make him the center of attention, and in turn his every move would be observed. It takes a lot of self-esteem and confidence to overcome everyone's judgemental looks. 'How stressful must it be

her boyfriend...' Ye Wei wondered.

Luckily he wasn't.

Walking down the gravel trail that ran through the campus, Ye Wei followed Miss Zi Yan to the gate of Green Phoenix Hall.

The Green Phoenix Hall was one of the female dormitories on South Star Academy campus. Here resided the female scholars in the senior classes who reached the top of their class, and those who were soon to be promoted to the Warrior rank. Being very close to becoming a Warrior, Zi Yan won herself a place at Green Phoenix Hall. She was then allowed to skip ordinary classes, not having to waste time in them. Unlike ordinary students who usually needed to go through the junior, intermediate, and senior class to reach the ten star level and eventually become a Warrior.

There were thirty-eight junior classes, thirty-six intermediate classes, and twenty-five senior classes, and outside these ranks, for the exceptional talents in South Star, there was a class for the gifted of which Lin Zi Yan was a part of. South Star academy taught five thousand three hundred and seventy students... But there were less than a hundred qualified enough to live at Green Phoenix!

Looking at the rows of classical elegant houses beyond the gate, Ye Wei's mind wandered. His memories from half a year ago resurfaced; his brain remembered a time past: a girl and him standing against the backdrop of these beautiful houses... With bittersweet memories slowly filling his head, the edge of his lips curled up slightly.

"Hurry!" Ye Wei snapped out of his nostalgia as Lin Zi Yan gave him a little tug towards the entrance.

"Okay." Ye Wei nodded reluctantly then unwillingly followed Miss Zi Yan through the gate towards the isolated quarters of Green Phoenix.

'I swore to myself that I would never step foot near Green Phoenix Hall again.' Images of the girl, Joe Yin, flashed in Ye Wei's head again. He shook his head with regret, letting out a depressing sigh.

'Sometimes people drift apart from each other over time, but time also

heals and changes a person. I should stop dwelling on this!' Ye Wei let positive ideas overcome dark ones, holding his head high. A growing confidence could be seen in his eyes.

Ye Wei followed Zi Yan into a little courtyard, and next to it was a small house. Upon realising that Zi Yan, herself, lived here, Ye Wei was quite astonished. It was completely out of his imagination that Zi Yan would have her own house and garden at Green Phoenix Hall, especially when the majority of students were assigned to smaller and less luxurious accommodations, sometimes even just a lone bunk bed.

It must be great to be Lin Zi Yan!

They entered the spacious training chamber within her house, and Zi Yan was eager to get to work. Without saying a word, she hastefully willed will-force to the tip of her index finger. Primal energy flowed from her dantian to her fingertips, merging with the will-force. And with her finger she drew the thirty-six runes in the air while making one mistake in the process, but the runes none the less formed a rushing tide pattern, the Triple Tidal Palm!

"Ye Wei, now that we're alone, can you tell me what's wrong with it?" Zi Yan was determined to get to the bottom of this.

"Miss Zi Yan, if I am not mistaken, you were trying to test me, right? Why is it so important that I correct this? Does it really matter?" Ye Wei fired a few questions with annoyance, while keeping a smile on his face to be polite.

"It would be game changing! If you could correct this, I would refer you to an established Runemaster. You might even become his apprentice and eventually someone who matters!" Zi Yan explained her intention sincerely. "And if you couldn't, I would like to refer you to a journeyman who is not as brilliant, but his teaching maybe more understandable for your level."

Ye Wei was touched having heard the confession and realised Zi Yan had pure intentions. His frustration, which he partially blamed Zi Yan for, over the scene in class and the hassle during the lecture subsided.

When he slept during, and eventually interrupted, the lecture, he was seen as a careless student; however, Zi Yan overlooked the negatives and tried to motivate him. He had only shown a bit of his newfound talent, yet she was ready to put a word in for him with an established Runemaster.

Ye Wei felt grateful for Miss Zi Yan's expectations, he couldn't help but admire her for her sincerity.

No longer frustrated, Ye Wei opened up: "Miss Zi Yan, the stance you displayed earlier and just now had three very obvious mistakes." Ye Wei looked at the thirty-six glimmering runes in the air, took two steps back, and stood right next to Miss Zi Yan ready to give his opinion on the mistakes.

"Three mistakes? Did you just say you felt three mistakes?!" Zi Yan was flabbergasted. It was only now that she knew Ye Wei saw three mistakes. 'But I only left one flaw?!' she thought. Ironically, Ye Wei had assumed she left three flaws, not one! How could that be?

Chapter 7: Refinement

Triple Tidal Palm was just a low level stance, but it had special significance to Green Moon because it was the first mystic stance created by Green Moon City's own Condensed Prime level Warrior, the great Warmaster Jiang Liu!

Back in the dark times, when hordes of demons besieged Green Moon City, Warmaster Jiang Liu held the front line of the city's defence, leading the armed forces. He fought valiantly for three days and three nights in the fierce battle, and he eventually passed away from extreme fatigue, having slain tens of thousands of demons.

Green Moon City would not be standing this day if it weren't for Warmaster Jiang Liu, and the millions of citizens have not forgotten about his contribution; the story of the Warmaster's noble sacrifice would forever be sung by bards and told by the older generations. For the Jiang family the Triple Tidal Palm held great significance, as it was the very first creation of Warmaster Jiang Liu. Over the years, the Jiangs paid seven visits to the Runemaster's Union and held small conferences with the Runemasters, trying to perfect the stance. They could feel there were some imperfections with the stance, but none of the Runemasters could take the next step and pinpoint the flaws. Thus, sadly, the attempts to perfect Triple Tidal Palm to date have not yielded results.

Lin Zi Yan didn't carry the Jiang family name, but her mother did. Zi Yan was the Warmaster's granddaughter.

Having just heard Ye Wei found three flaws when she only intentionally left one, Zi Yan's hope surged as there was a chance Ye Wei could help perfect this special stance.

She looked at Ye Wei, shocked at how strong his soul sensitivity was and wondering where it all suddenly came from.

"So what are the three mistakes?" Zi Yan tried to suppress her excitement. She looked at Ye Wei nervously.

Ye Wei didn't know Miss Zi Yan was trying to perfect the Triple Tidal

Palm. Taking the task for a casual quiz, he raised his index finger up in a relaxed way, pointing at three connecting nodes between the runes. One of the flawed nodes was left there by Zi Yan intentionally, though the other two looked completely normal for her and the Runemasters who had been studying this stance too; nobody had ever said anything about these two nodes in the conferences!

“And how do you think these three flaws can be corrected? Would you show me?” There was a trace of trembling in Zi Yan’s otherwise clear voice. Her eyes completely set on Ye Wei, engaging herself in this attempt to completely perfect the stance.

“I am only a one star Student, I don’t have sufficient primal energy!”

Ye Wei shook his head, feeling a bit saddened and frustrated. Ye Wei thought to himself, sighing, ‘How does she expect to me to demonstrate it? I am just a one star Student, ha, I can barely draw a rune.’

Triple Tidal Palm was a low level stance, but there were still thirty-six runes, each extremely complex and cumbersome. To correct the flaws was not an easy task and it was even harder attempting it purely by words, which was the only way Ye Wei could.

“Erm...”

Realising she got carried away, Zi Yan looked at Ye Wei apologetically. She completely forgot Ye Wei was only a one star Student. Ye Wei still had a lot of training ahead of him before he could manipulate his Qi and even more training until he had enough Qi and primal energy to sustain a stance.

“I’m sorry. Can you try to talk me through how it can be refined and perfected?” Zi Yan was getting a bit restless.

“The connecting node between the sixth and the seventh runes need to be smoother, more... circular. The tenth and the eleventh runes need to be swapped, replaced by...” Ye Wei tried to be as detailed as possible, but he struggled, as he did not know the proper terminology.

Zi Yan started to frown. She didn’t understand half of what Ye Wei said.

She did not comprehend much concerning advanced rune structures, because she was supposed to learn that after becoming a Warrior.

To refine a stance, one had to understand and be familiar with performing stances!

Zi Yan grinded her teeth in frustration. She was trying to think outside the box, looking for ways to make Ye Wei's method clear: "Ye Wei, stand behind me!" She blushed as she ordered Ye Wei.

Triple Tidal Palm meant everything to her family. The Jiangs had been dreaming for decades on how to improve the first stance created by Warmaster Jiang Liu. This wish was the same for Zi Yan; being the Warmaster's granddaughter, she was not going to let this chance of honouring her granddad slip past her.

"Oh?" The shy Ye Wei hesitated before agreeing: "Okay!" Ye Wei moved behind Zi Yan, keeping a breadth of distance between the two as he started to draw on thin air, and Zi Yan copied his motions.

Following Ye Wei's guidance, Zi Yan slowly drew the runes for Triple Tidal Palm. Feeling Ye Wei breathing down her neck, her heart started beating faster... It was her first time being so close to a boy. Zi Yan took a deep breath and ignored the distraction.

Her primal energy flowed through her fingers as she began drawing the runes.

"That's not right!" Ye Wei scolded.

As Ye Wei's voice faded, the half finished rune imploded.

It had failed!

Zi Yan was slightly disappointed but did not give up: "Let's continue!"

Ye Wei repeated the process a few more times, drawing in the air as Zi Yan followed. None of their attempts were successful, though, and they took a toll on Zi Yan's primal energy reserve. After several attempts, she was left panting and gasping for air.

"Miss Zi Yan, how about just letting it go for now? We can do this some

other time, maybe?” Ye Wei said with a bitter smile. He then looked at Zi Yan, and because she had sweat a lot during the attempts to refining the stance, her dress glued to her body, revealing her pale and flawless skin. Ye Wei lingered for a bit too long and started to have inappropriate thoughts and knew he needed to stop his mind from wandering. He blushed and turned his head around.

“No!” Zi Yan shook her head with determination; she needed to refine this stance while she had the chance! For her family, for her grandad!

Zi Yan reached into her pocket and found a white pill. She quickly swallowed it and sat down in a lotus position, restoring her primal energy and Qi.

Ye Wei was speechless. That was a Primal Spirit pill... one of the most valuable medicinal pills that most Warriors couldn't even afford.

In a lotus position, Zi Yan was completely focused on restoring her energy while Ye Wei just stood there, as he had nothing to do. He cast his eyes down onto her. Zi Yan's slightly curled lashes, her delicate nose, pastel pink lips... Her features were exquisitely beautiful... Framed by her silky shoulder length hair, she resembled a goddess from the classic sculptures.

Ye Wei's eyes followed her slender neck downwards and his heart raced as his eyes stopped below her neckline. He could see her slightly raised breasts, not large but perky, forming magnificent cleavage between them, and her light toned skin was flushed, making her that much more alluring for Ye Wei.

Ye Wei being the teenager he was and alone in the same room with the most popular girl in school was an incredible feat and a rare occasion; his impulses were taking over his body!

“What am I thinking!” Ye Wei shook his head vigorously, trying to rid himself of the impure thoughts. He took a very deep breath and forced himself to look up at the roof. But the thought of Zi Yan's beauty, her body, forced his head back down, and he couldn't help but take this chance to look at her again.

Moments after, Zi Yan opened her eyes. With the aid of one Primal Spirit pill, Zi Yan restored all of her energy in a matter of minutes.

She raised her head, and when she was about to say something, her and Ye Wei's eyes crossed. Judging by how red his face was, Zi Yan realised her posture exposed a lot of skin.: "Ah!" she exclaimed. Her shy face was colored red due to her blushing cheeks. She immediately stood up, not letting Ye Wei see her like that a second longer.

"I..." Ye Wei was embarrassed. He tried to apologise but choked up instead.

Zi Yan adjusted her breathing and eventually calmed down. She was embarrassed, too, but she let it pass without saying a word. 'At least Ye Wei knew that it was a bit inappropriate,' she thought. Ye Wei was a lot more honest and less aggressive compared to her other hormone driven admirers.

"Let's continue!" Zi Yan was determined to perfect the Triple Tidal Palm. effect

"Yea!" Looking at how undaunted Zi Yan appeared to be, Ye was affected by her vibe. Although Ye Wei didn't know why she was being so stubborn, he decided to help her fulfil her wish.

Ye Wei continued guiding Zi Yan, but the team had many more failures, because Zi Yan, herself, was relatively new to performing stances, let alone mastering and perfecting the Triple Tidal Palm.

"Let's try again. You can come closer, it's okay!" Zi Yan lightly bit her lower lip, turned around and told Ye Wei in a soft tone.

"How much closer?" Ye Wei carefully took a half step forward, which brought his body just a hair away from Zi Yan's back; he could clearly feel the warmth from her body rising towards his face.

Zi Yan's fragrance lingered around Ye's nose and his heart started racing again, but he was focused on the task at hand. 'Zi Yan was about to make a mistake!' he thought. His hand reacted quicker than any sound he could make to warn Zi Yan. With lightning, speed, he grabbed a hold

of her delicate hand and saved the rune. The texture of Zi Yan's skin was so soft and smooth, comforting Ye Wei as he continued guiding her.

Feeling the warmth from Ye Wei's hand, Zi Yan's face warmed up a little, but it took no time for her to regain focus and steadily release primal energy, flawlessly completing rune after rune.

Chapter 8: Perfection, Quintuple Tidal Palm

His back and her chest were tightly affixed together, Ye Wei could feel Zi Yan's slightly curvy body, but he tried to ignore these sensations. He took a deep breath and focused on sketching the runes while holding her hand.

"Move that rune here, then erase these two, now sketch them over here instead!" Holding Miss Zi Yan's hand, Ye Wei calmly helped her rearrange the runes.

"Nice!" Zi Yan nodded, concentrating on Ye Wei's advice while rewriting and rearranging the runes. Still energized, Zi Yan's primal energy was lingering around her fingertips. Guided by Ye Wei's hand, her energy left trails and formed runes in the air.

The runes made a bell-like sound as they connected in an orderly fashion, forming a complete pattern. The pattern in front of Zi Yan suddenly came alive. The tidal pattern emitted rays of blinding azure light, painting all the walls blue.

The mystic stance was now completely perfected!

'This is the best form Triple Tidal Palm can take!' Feeling the stance had reached perfection, Ye Wei was brimming with satisfaction, causing him to finally smile.

Three roars erupted from the center of the bright light, together with the salty smell of the sea.

"It's finished!" Zi Yan was overjoyed because after Ye Wei's assistance, the runes connected much more smoothly; therefore, it was much easier to activate the new stance compared to the old one. In the battlefield, even a split second could be the difference between life and death. The shorter completion time of the new Tidal Palm increased the practicality of it in actual combat!

"Triple Tidal Palm was just an ordinary low Spirit level stance; even

though it was perfected, sadly, it won't be able to breakthrough into the mid level, but that doesn't matter! Grandfather's first stance has finally been perfected!"

"The family always wanted to refine this, but all our attempts have failed. I can't believe Ye Wei perfected it so easily. The Qi flow is much more fluid now!" Zi Yan said as she appreciated the result, two more roars resounded from the epicentre of the bright light.

As the sound of the three waves reached Zi Yan and Ye Wei's ears, two more waves of energy surged out.

"Was that five breaking waves I heard?!"

Zi Yan stared at the stance in disbelief, as though she was hallucinating. Her face displayed a shocked expression, as she slowly accepted the fact that she had just heard five roars instead of the usual three.

'This was no longer the Triple Tidal Palm... this is the Quintuple Tidal Palm!'

This is way more advanced than the Triple Tidal Palm and should be categorized as a mid Spirit level stance!

Ye Wei's refinement actually evolved the stance to the next level, a staggering achievement beyond belief!

As the energy of the stance faded, a dazzling pillar of white light appeared, descending from the sky. It shone down on Zi Yan. Bathing in the pillar of light, she looked angelic as the pores on her skin opened up, absorbing the cosmic power from the heavens.

Upgrading, perfecting, and creating a new stance triggered this phenomenon. Cosmic energy is used to improve one's Sentient and strength.

Cosmic energy is pure and compressed, similar to the energy the Sages harvested from Mystic Mount in ancient times. If one wanted to obtain the same amount of power that the cosmic energy gave to Zi Yan just now, it would take years by normal training.

Bang!

The cosmic energy entered Zi Yan's body, breaking through the final star-gate. With all ten star-gates open, Zi Yan had just become a Warrior!

Witnessing this scene, Ye Wei was startled as he felt the vast energy from the pillar of light. He was determined to create his own stances, to gain cosmic energy and from it upgrade his Sentient!

If he could achieve that, he would no longer be a mere red Sentient trash.

The white light faded away slowly eventually dispersing into luminant dust and dissolving into the atmosphere.

Lin Zi Yan turned around and looked at Ye Wei. Her eyes showed complicated mixed feelings of shock, disbelief, and gratefulness.

Whoever still regarded Ye Wei as a trash could not be more incorrect. A thirteen year old who possessed soul sensibility strong enough to help evolve the Triple Tidal Palm! How could he be trash with such talent?!

Having displayed this level of soul sensitivity, it's almost certain Ye Wei can get a good Runemaster to study under and become one himself!

'Ye Wei has been studying at South Star Academy for three years now; he wasted three whole years in a junior class! With his talent if he had a good tutor three years ago, then he could be taking the exam to become a Runemaster now!'

'South Star could have produced a thirteen year old Runemaster! And now it's just a dream... I will find out who was responsible for his entrance exam and we are going to have a talk!' Zi Yan got emotional as she pictured how South Star Academy missed out on a chance to make history.

Zi Yan with a solemn apologetic tone, expressed gratitude to Ye: "Ye Wei, you helped me perfect the Triple Tidal Palm and break through to Warrior level. I owe you a favour, so if you have any wishes, or if there is anything I can help you with just ask!" If Zi Yan had known Ye Wei's capability, she would have given him this task of refinement long ago, as

if he is an experienced Runemaster.

Ye Wei shrugged and smiled “Don’t mention it, it’s my pleasure!”. In his mind being so close to Zi Yan was the best reward he could have been given, and the experience was already engraved in his memory!

“Ye Wei were you treated unfairly when you took your entrance exam? If that was the case, I can consult the vice principal and see what went wrong when you were assigned to the class you’re in. We should seek justice!” Zi Yan couldn’t stop grinding her teeth. Her view of Ye Wei had completely changed at this point, he was a genius at birth and should have been assigned to gifted class and she was determined to help him get in.

“It’s okay, I think my soul sensitivity started improving two years ago!” Ye Wei answered quickly because he didn’t expect that Zi Yan could just meet the vice-principal whenever she wished to do so. Ye Wei didn’t want to cause trouble and technically he did not lie, as he knew the improvement was related to his dream from an hour ago.

“So that’s the case... I see!” Lin Zi Yan nodded, there are indeed many cases where students develop their sensibility over time as they train. A legend even stated that some people could gain soul sensitivity while they were dreaming. “Since that is the case, I will refer you to an extremely experienced Runemaster. He has a great reputation he built for himself over the years, so if you do become his apprentice I am sure you will get the guidance you need to become a great Runemaster!”

“Thank you Miss Zi Yan!” Upon hearing the news Ye Wei was overjoyed, as he expected his training would be much faster than ever before with the aid of a Runemaster.

“Drop the ‘Miss’! You’re like a brother to me now!” Zi Yan smiled at Ye Wei while her beautiful eyes transmitted sincerity.

“Thank you Zi Yan!” Ye Wei said with a little unwillingness.

Seeing how stiff and shy Ye Wei acted, Zi Yan chuckled: “Why don’t you head back and rest for now? I will go see the Runemaster now and will inform you if there is any news.”

“Yeah, okay, sounds good!” Ye Wei said to Zi Yan, waved goodbye and headed out.

He couldn't stop thinking about how close he was to the school idol, Zi Yan. ‘How great would it be if I can get this beautiful girl to be my girlfriend! However, she sees me as a little brother, sadly.’

Ye Wei realised the probability of them ending up a couple was very small. In the end, his academic achievements and family background were nothing compared to Zi Yan's.

‘Oh well, there is still a sliver of hope. If I become a Runemaster in the future, I would definitely have a chance.’

Chapter 9: Dragons Don't Associate with Snakes

“There’s no way I could perform a stance before becoming a seven star Student. Then I could refine my stances or possibly create some. It would be great if I could get hold of some Quenching pills though...”

Ye Wei whispered to himself as he closed the door, exiting the small house into the courtyard.

Outside Zi Yan’s place lay a cobblestone path that led straight to the Green Phoenix Hall’s front gate. Trees blossomed on both sides of the pathway. They acted as vertical blinds, filtering the sunshine and projecting webs of shadows across the ground. While walking through the patches of light, Ye Wei thought about today’s life-altering events.

He visited the Mystic Mountain in his dream and obtained a treasure trove of knowledge on runes, yet he still remained a one star Student with his unchanging red Sentient.

Having enough Qi and Primal energy to perform a stance, which was the basis of harvesting cosmic energy through refinement or stance creation, required a seven star cultivation. There was nothing more important than training right this moment for Ye Wei.

Cosmic energy could only benefit whoever performed the stance refinement or creation, which would ultimately cleanse and transform his or her Sentient.

Talent in physique and combat were crucial to one’s rapid improvement. In Ye Wei’s case, where he lacked both, he would surely need some Quenching concoction to quicken his training!

‘I shall breakthrough to two star level. One step at a time!’

While walking gracefully on the cobblestone path, Ye Wei fist pumped and promised to train harder.

‘I will soon become as strong as my cousin Ye Zhong, and become the

pride of my family! It was just an impossible dream... but now I know it could become reality! With all the knowledge in my head, it is entirely possible!’

Ye Wei was filled head to toe with positivity and confidence like never before.

‘From one star to two... Body strength should be my main focus!’

‘The most direct and simple way to improve my body strength is to nurture it with primal energy. But it’s hard and slow for me to absorb primal energy from nature due to my limited talent. I would need at least six months to get to two stars!’

‘But if I can somehow get enough Quenching pills, it should only take around two weeks for two stars!’

Though Ye Wei was quite determined, the Ye family had limited resources, which were usually spent on more talented family members.

He understood the family’s practice. If he were the head of the family, he too would distribute the resources all the same. Therefore, he was well aware that getting goods comes up to himself and his connections.

When Ye Wei reached the gate of Green Phoenix Hall, the sun was already half sunken under the skyline, painting the sky red. It was already time for students to return to their dormitories.

As Ye Wei exited Green Phoenix Hall, more students stared at him again. This time, however, they were Green Phoenix girls, who were pointing and gossiping.

“What is this boy doing at a female hall?”

“Who is that? I’ve never seen his face before. He doesn’t look like he’s from Crouching Dragon Hall... Is one of our girls getting another pathetic admirer?”

“There are too many daydreaming romantics in this world!”

“He isn’t from Crouching Dragon Hall. What is he doing here?”

The harsh words did not escape Ye Wei’s ears; he raised his eyebrows

slightly but didn't talk back.

Three years of listening to scathing comments and criticism... What he heard now could only be mild, and he could dismiss them rather easily. He had learned to be thankful to the critics and bullies who strengthened his mind.

“Ye Wei? Why are you here?”

Out of the blue was a familiar voice that startled him, and his face went pale in a matter of seconds. Ye Wei unwillingly turned around, casting his eyes towards the source of the voice.

He was looking at a teenage girl in a red leather dress and standing in a pair of silver long boots. Her shiny black hair fell over her ears, giving off a young and energetic vibe. Her friends convinced her to talk to Ye Wei.

Her name was Joe Yin, and she was once close to Ye Wei!

“I'm waiting for a friend, this visit has nothing to do with you!” Ye Wei made up an excuse. He was triggered by her presence, though, and his eye twitched slightly. He took a deep breath and stared at her coldly.

“You? Waiting for a friend outside Green Phoenix Hall? Joe Yin chuckled and looked at Ye Wei with a sarcastic smile like as if she just heard a good joke.

The Joes and the Ye's were very close, and the two families often invited each other over. Ye Wei and Joe Yin had known each other since they were toddlers because of this. They were the same age; with Ye Wei being slightly older, however, he always took care of Joe Yin as if she were his own little sister. They were like two peas in a pod and quite fond of each other.

In the entry exam, Ye Wei was told he had a red Sentient and Joe Yin, green. With that kind of talent, Joe Yin's cultivation skyrocketed and got herself into the intermediate class, while Ye Wei got stuck at one star level, sitting in the junior class.

Joe Yin would forever be like a little sister to Ye Wei. Even after reaching six stars, getting herself into the intermediate class and a place

to live in Green Phoenix Hall, the mental image of a snot-nosed crying little sister who was always clinging onto him did not fade.

Ye Wei thought Joe Yin still needed his babysitting!

Half a year ago, right before Joe Yin was about to move to Green Phoenix, Ye Wei enthusiastically went to help her pack. However, he didn't even get a thank you.

"Dragons don't associate with snakes." For Ye Wei, it wasn't just a rough insult—it was disapproval and betrayal from the person closest to him. Those five words were like sharp nails buried deeply into his heart. That was when Ye Wei realised Joe Yin grew up and changed; in the real world, you would be despised by everyone unless you are feared!

In Joe Yin's mind, being associated with Ye Wei was shameful. Even being seen talking to him for a minute would look bad!

"Ye Wei, right? Stop daydreaming, you and Joe Yin are literally in different worlds!"

"Joe Yin is going to breakthrough to seven stars and will become a Warrior in around two years, at most. How about you? One star in three years? Now that's a feat!"

"You? Waiting for a friend? Can you not read? It reads Green Phoenix Hall on the gate! The elites who live here are way out of your league!"

"Why don't you look into a mirror? And tell me what you see?"

The girls around Joe Yin were riding on their high horses, looking down on Ye Wei and giving their all to insult him.

Ye Wei was trying his hardest to keep his cool from all this poisonous hatred. His face became paler and paler, his nails dug into his palm and his clenched fists colored his knuckles white.

Ye Wei slowly raised his head while grinding his teeth. His black eyes held a cold aura as they passed over everyone before finally resting upon Joe Yin. He never wanted anything from Joe Yin. He only gave and gave selflessly, but never did he think that all he would receive in return was

ice-cold mockery!

Who was this person who looked like Joe Yin?

People change!

‘You can count on people as much as you can count on putting out fire with paper!’

‘You must only believe in yourself. Only by gaining strength would one receive respect from others... not when you are weak!’

Ye Wei tried his best to learn something, making what good he could from this mess, and this thought is what he came up with.

Ignoring Joe Yin and all the insults, Ye Wei kept his cool and walked away.

“Ye Wei, don’t come again. We live in different worlds. I couldn’t have explained myself any better than that day—dragons don’t associate with snakes! I don’t want to be seen with you!” Joe Yin said while staring at Ye Wei’s back as he walked away, cutting all ties.

Chapter 10: Fiery Sun Quencher

From a certain distance, an elegant and beautiful teenager observed the whole violent verbal exchange. It was Lin Zi Yan!

Her glossy purple hair was resting on her shoulders and the white slim fit dress emphasized her curves in contrast to the thin profile of her body. While her neck and collarbones were gracefully and seductively exposed through the opening of the dress, which was framed by the embellished collar on her dress. There was even a stylish purple flower embroidered on the dress, sitting right next to the bulge on her chest.

Zi Yan saw Ye Wei slowly walking away from Green Phoenix Hall. She could see from Ye Wei's posture that he felt lonely and frustrated because of what just took place between Joe Yin and him. The distant look on Ye Wei's face caused a throbbing pain somewhere in Zi Yan's heart.

But there was not even a hint of rage on his face. Ye Wei always held rage back like a dormant volcano that would never erupt.

Lin Zi Yan couldn't imagine how much mockery and pressure he had received from his peers and teachers; that on top of the sadness in his heart due to his poor performance in class and being a red Sentient one star Student, who was constantly told he would never be worth anything other than trash. Even now with his new found soul sensibility, he still distanced himself from the world because he didn't have enough confidence to stand on his own two feet and talk back to people.

Like a hedgehog, Ye Wei faced obstacles in the fetal position, passively protecting himself from the world.

While looking at the lonely figure of Ye Wei getting smaller and smaller as he walked away, Zi Yan imagined the solitude he had experienced for all these years and tried to empathize with him.

"Ye Wei, where are you heading off to? Let's go together!" Zi Yan called out to Ye Wei, with a uplifting smile on her face as she suggested casually. She quickly walked towards Ye Wei, with her dress flying in the wind of the summer breeze, causing her to look like an angel that

descended from the heavens.

Beauty is subjective and relative. Joe Yin and her friends were good-looking academic achievers, but when Zi Yan came into sight, it was akin to watching a swan arriving near a flock of ducks.

Every time Joe Yin and her friends saw Zi Yan, they would start comparing themselves and become ashamed. When it came to family, wealth, looks, and talent the gap between them and Zi Yan was simply too vast. They didn't even have the the courage to socialize with her. They preferred hanging out in their shared dormitories, whereas the private houses were out of their league!

'Who did Lin Zi Yan just talk to? Are my ears deceiving me?' Joe Yin's eyes widened in disbelief as Zi Yan walked towards Ye Wei.

He came to Green Phoenix Hall for Lin Zi Yan!

But how did he even know her? They were from different worlds. One was trash that lived on the earth, while the other was a star that was only fit to belong in the heavens, themselves!

Hearing Zi Yan's call, Ye Wei turned around with a startled look on his face. He mumbled softly "Mm... Sister Zi Yan..." He had almost forgotten to drop the 'Miss'.

"I have to go to the Runemaster Union and we'll be taking the same way, so let's walk together!" Lin Zi Yan smiled and said this casually. She looked around, coldly setting her eyes onto Joe Yin and her friends and started frowning: "Who are these people? Ye Wei, I don't think you should waste time talking to these nobodies! There are a lot of commoners who are not worthy of our attention at this academy. You should simply ignore them."

After processing what Zi Yan had just said, the faces of Joe Yin and her friends had a pale complexion. All of them were bitterly thinking the same thing 'Are we really unworthy commoners in her eyes?'

Like a rock falling onto thin glass, Joe Yin's conceited nature was instantly shattered by Zi Yan's words. In Joe Yin's head, Zi Yan had so

many great qualities that she was someone Joe Yin idolized and wished to be someday.

Although Joe Yin was already a six star Student, Zi Yan was out of her league in status and strength.

Joe Yin could not even understand why her idol, Lin Zi Yan, was with trash like Ye Wei and was even supporting him. She ground her teeth, though she was offended by Lin Zi Yan Joe Yin didn't have the courage to talk back because she was well aware that if Zi Yan said anything it could be the ruin of the Joe family!

As Ye Wei assessed the situation he could not resist giving Zi Yan a thankful look, having realised she was getting the girls back for what they had just said.

"Let's go!" Zi Yan smiled merrily and casually held Ye Wei's hand.

Sensing Zi Yan's soft breast on his arm, Ye Wei felt slightly cramped. He stood tall and stopped looking at Joe Yin, as he set off with Zi Yan.

"How does Miss Zi Yan know Ye Wei?" A tall slim girl was confused and therefore asked a couple of questions after Ye Wei and Zi Yan had walked past "They looked really close, their relationship might not be simple!"

"I just heard Ye Wei calling Miss Zi Yan by her last name!" A round faced girl said in surprise.

"If I'm not mistaken, that is Ye Wei, a boy with red Sentient. How come Miss Zi Yan is speaking to him?" The tall girl said after thinking it through. 'I have never seen Lin Zi Yan this close to a boy, maybe they are dating?'

Seeing Ye Wei and Zi Yan slowly disappearing in the distance, Joe Yin's lips started bleeding from extensive biting, as she thought about what she said to Ye. 'Dragons don't associate with snakes', Ironically would be a perfect summation of her situation and that phrase she had previously spoke made her feel as if someone stabbed her heart with a dagger!

Now Joe Yin knew she did not know who Ye Wei was anymore. She believed Ye Wei would not ever talk back to her, because he was

defenseless and pathetic, but now Joe Yin realized he just could not be bothered to waste energy talking back to someone unworthy!

Lin Zi Yan turned and glanced at Joe Yin and cleared her throat. ‘Ye Wei has the sharpest soul sensitivity I have ever seen. I am one hundred percent certain he can become a Runemaster’

Just like that, Zi Yan kept holding onto Ye Wei’s arm and together they exited Green Phoenix Hall stepping onto the gravel trail leaving the speechless Joe Yin and her friends behind.

The sun had now set and it is rush hour in Green Moon City and the path was packed full of people. After making sure they were out of Joe Yin’s sight, Zi Yan let go of Ye Wei’s arm and she blushed a little in an adorable way.

“Zi Yan, thanks!” Ye Wei looked at the beauty in front of him and said sincerely.

Of course Ye Wei wouldn’t assume that Miss Zi Yan fancies him; he is clear that arm holding stunt was just an act to build up his image and gain respect from the girls, an act to help him!

After going through so much, Ye Wei started to have feelings and affection for Lin Zi Yan, as a brilliant and kind girl is irresistible to most boys after all.

But for now Ye Wei knew that Zi Yan and him would never work and therefore stopped thinking too much about it.

“Don’t mention it. I told you you’re like my little brother now!” Lin Zi Yan smiled playfully, looking at Ye Wei’s well-proportioned face and remembering the moment when he perfected the Triple Tidal Palm, she was still a bit shocked.

Ye Wei’s eyes were set on Zi Yan’s charming looks, spacing out.

Neither of them talked and the atmosphere became a little ambiguous and awkward.

“Oh yea Ye Wei, I have some Fiery Sun Quencher pills here take them

and put them to good use!” Lin Zi Yan took out a jade bottle from her pocket and passed it to Ye Wei. Giving him these pills was one of the reason she went to catch up to Ye Wei at the gate.

“Fiery Sun Quencher pills?” Ye Wei was startled, there are a wide variety of quenching pills, and Fiery Sun Quencher was amongst the most effective and valuable pills that could be concocted. In the Ye Family, only Wei’s cousin Ye Zhong was deemed worthy enough to get a few Fiery Sun pills.

Ye Wei stopped spacing out and started panicking a little “Miss Zi Yan, this is too valuable, I can’t take this!”

“You deserve it, you perfected Triple Tidal Palm with me and helped me become a Warrior, do you really think that is worth less than a few Fiery Sun Quencher pills? Lin Zi Yan played along pretending to be serious when she said it.

Chapter 11: Two Star Student

If it was a cheaper quencher pill, like Bone Strengtheners, Ye Wei could have accepted it easily, but the Fiery Sun Quencher was way too valuable!

One pill cost five hundred silver, and the bottle Zi Yan passed to Ye Wei contained ten pills. That is five thousand silver worth of Fiery Sun Quencher pills!

One might not know how much five thousand silver is.

The Ye Family was not a small family in Green Moon City, yet Ye Wei's monthly allowance was twenty silver and around thirty silver is enough to feed a family well for a month.

Lin Zi Yan was very wealthy, Ye Wei knew Zi Yan wasn't an ordinary girl, but he never anticipated her to be this wealthy.

"Accept it as a reward for what you've done for me!" Afraid she was going to hurt Ye Wei's pride with such a big gift, Zi Yan tried to make it easier for him saying it was a reward.

Ye Wei paused and thought about it "I will take one then!"

"You are my brother now, and you're not going to take what your sister is giving you? Do you despise me?"

"...Okay then." Ye Wei nodded and took Zi Yan's gift, his heart was filled with gratitude as these Fiery Sun Quencher pills are exactly what he needs right now.

"Good!" Zi Yan stopped her tough act and smiled as she pulled Ye Wei on his shoulders and said: "Let's go!"

For unknown reasons, for Zi Yan there is something making her gravitate toward Ye Wei, the distance between them had shortened within the span of a few hours.

"If you have any problems, you can come directly to me with them, you know where I live at in Green Phoenix now. I will head towards Master Yi now." Zi Yan said her farewell with a big smile on her face as they

reached a crossroad.

“Ok.” Ye Wei nodded

Lin Zi Yan’s graceful figure slowly became smaller and eventually disappeared along the side path.

“Thanks you so much for the Fiery Sun Quencher pills I, Ye Wei will remember this favour!” Ye Wei held the jade bottle tightly, mumbling to himself. He was very quiet but at the same time hard as metal; he was determine to make something happen with these pills.

The last beam of sunlight faded as evening progressed into night time as Ye Wei returned to his dorm. South Star Academy is the cradle of future fighters and they even provide dorm rooms for the worst students.

His room was very minimalistic, there was a bland wooden table in the middle of the room and against the wall was a plank of wood on legs he called a bed, sadly there was not even a chair in the room. The door let out a loud squeak when Ye Wei closed it tightly; he then took off his shoes and sat on the bed in a lotus position with his back against the wall.

“With these Fiery Sun Quencher pills, I should be able to breakthrough to two stars soon!”

Ye Wei took out the bottle of Quencher pills, he was a bit nervous and breathed a bit quicker than usual. Nearly all of the students who were admitted the same time as Ye Wei three years ago made decent progress and are now in the intermediate class, and even a few talented ones are in the senior class.

“I am very far behind right now but once I get to the seven star level, I will be able to catch up in no time! Ye Wei fiercely shook his fists, feeling confident with his game plan.

Ye Wei opened the jade bottle and poured out one pill. He sat still and saw what five hundred silver looked like, then he took a deep breath and swallowed the pill.

Hiss!

The pill immediately melted upon touching Ye Wei's tongue, a scorching wave of energy flowed through his body turning his skin bright red all over, he looked almost like a piece of glowing coal.

Ye Wei's skin and muscles were drenched with the surge of energy, as it tempered his skin and muscles, and strengthened his body. He was visibly getting bigger.

He sat there absorbing the vast amount of energy from the pill.

A whole 10 hours passed and the sky was brightening up starting to turn red and getting ready for a new day. It wasn't until then that Ye Wei absorbed everything from the pill.

"That was strong! I got more from this one pill than I did from at least three months worth of training!" Still sitting in a lotus position on the plank of wood, Ye Wei opened his eyes leisurely looking slightly childish as he couldn't hide the joy and satisfaction from his result.

"With this speed I will breakthrough in no time!"

Ye Wei made fists with both hands as he felt his strength and energy surging. His lips curled up and displayed great satisfaction. Being one star ranked for three years was not glorifying, but it did give Ye Wei a good foundation to develop on. Now that he took one of the best Quenching pills, it's very possible that he would break through in the matter of days.

Furthermore, Ye Wei was surprised as he discovered how his physique had changed a bit after his dream yesterday during the lecture.

"I will breakthrough before returning home that ought to surprise my parents!" Ye Wei's astounding dark eyes shone bright in the early dawn light.

The Ye Wei of the past could never dare to imagine his training could go this fast, but with the recent changes to his body and the acquisition of the Fiery Sun Quencher pills, Ye Wei knew he stood a fighting chance of improving rapidly.

Two stars was nothing, but to breakthrough with Ye Wei's red Sentient,

now that was not a simple task at all!

“Without strength nobody will notice nor respect me. One day i will become a great fearsome Warrior!” Remembering the mockery he got from Joe Yin and her friends, Ye Wei held his fist tight, his veins bulging.

There are many factors that determine how strong a Warrior is, their foundation is based on cultivation and stance performance, but putting aside stance performance as it is a non-factor before seven stars, the greater one's cultivation is the more primal energy and Qi one has to use; also how fast one can cultivate is determined by Sentient and Formula usage.

The Sentient spectrum is divided like this: red, orange, yellow, green, lime, blue, and violet; with red being the weakest and violet the strongest.

The stronger one's Sentient is the quicker they are able to absorb primal energy from their natural surroundings.

Whereas formulas purify and convert the primal energy we absorb into a storable form like a transformer. Primal energy is a violent energy and if it is not purified and converted it will do more harm than benefit to the body.

Like stances, formulas are also divided in five ranks: Spirit, Myst, Earth, Sky, and Heaven. With the low, mid, and high, three levels per rank.

To fill his body to the brim with primal energy, Ye Wei's red Sentient needs to work non-stop for around a day when the norm is usually around six to ten hours.

Though Ye Wei's formula is not shabby, the mid Myst level Falling Star Form was passed down in the Ye family through generations. And it does a good job purifying primal energy at a reasonable speed.

The only thing that was holding Ye Wei back was his Sentient!

The distance between Ye Wei and other students his age just became greater over time, as his rate of cultivating was much slower than others. Without resources and enough Qi to support his training his body simply could not keep up.

Chapter 12: Perfect Falling Star

“These next three days I am not going to lectures, I’m going to lock myself up and focus on training!”

Ye Wei got up and did his stretching routine after getting off his bed, then he started training after washing up.

“Time to use the Falling Star formula!”

Moments later, Ye Wei returned to sitting on the bed and he crossed his legs into a lotus position. He closed his eyes and adjust the speed of his breathing distancing himself from the world and slowly entered a zen state.

Ye Wei’s hands formed a complex hand seal in front of his chest, with the formula operating his will-force slowly formed a vortex with the epicenter in between his eyebrows, as the suction drew in thin threads of primal energy from every direction.

The primal energy got stuck onto the will-force and then was stored in Ye Wei’s dantian. Now the energy was ready to be purified by the Falling Star form!

An entire day passed and Ye Wei’s dantian was finally fully saturated, the speed of his absorption being outrageously slow. Ye Wei opened his eyes wide when the last bit of space in his dantain was filled. One could see a glimmer of silver deep inside Ye Wei’s eyes and as he formed the thirty-six different hand seals, the raging primal energy finally started to be tamed and purified.

Suddenly, Ye Wei heard a noise inside his head.

It came out of nowhere while Ye Wei was purifying primal energy with the Falling Star form. The loud cracking noise resembled thunder rumbling, he also saw an image of a towering mountain, the mountain covered in hundreds of thousands of mystic runes, the runes seeming to have a life of their own, crawling on the mountain’s surface. Out of nowhere appeared a spectral being, revealing itself on the mountain.

His translucent figure allowed the spectral being's meridian network, a beautiful web of green and red to be visible!

Ye Wei was stunned by the fact that the mountain revisited him, but something else caught his attention. The being was sitting down, in a lotus position, seemingly in the process of purifying primal energy with a formula and his green and red meridian network was vibrating slightly. Ye Wei could clearly see the energy, silver in colour, circling the network.

“Is this... Falling Star form?!”

Ye Wei recognised the route of primal energy circulation and it was very similar to the Falling Star form he was using at that moment, but the spectral being's version was far more complex!

The Ye family's Falling Star form utilized thirty-six meridians, while this unknown being's silver energy was circulating through a hundred and eight meridians, forming a perfect cycle.

All the energy stored in its dantian was purified within only one cycle!

In contrast Ye Wei's Falling Star form takes at least 9 cycles to purify a full dantian. The silver energy passed through more meridians inside the spectral being's system and it was passing through with twice the speed compared to Ye Wei's form.

‘Our Ye family has always used the mid Myst level Falling Star form, and its speed is way slower than this spectral being's form though they are similar, is he using a high Myst level formula?’

Deep in thought, Ye Wei was startled by this revelation. Being a Ye who is used to the Falling Star form, he knows exactly what a high Myst level formula could help him achieve.

A high Myst level formula can purify the same amount of primal energy three times as quick as a mid Myst level formula; putting Ye Wei's horrendous energy absorption speed into account, if the purification process is sped up three times, training should be twice as efficient.

To be twice as efficient...

Wei's cousin Ye Zhong is a twenty-two years old four star Warrior. With Zhong's talent, he will need two or three years of non stop training in order to breakthrough, but with the spectral being's Falling Star form he would only need a bit more than a year to become a five Star Warrior!

A twenty-three year old five star Warrior is quite a feat and that would make him one of the strongest young talents in Green Moon City.

Moreover, there are no more than five families in all of Green Moon City that have a high Myst level formula. Say the Ye family started utilising this version of the Falling Star form, then his family's status would be on a totally different level.

The spectral being circulated his energy 3 times around his meridians. Ye Wei watched and memorised every hand seal used and the circulation route, the information was accurately imprinted onto his mind.

“Om!”

Still sitting in a lotus position on his bed, Ye Wei's head buzzed and his body shook as he instantaneously opened his eyes.

“Zoom!”

Ye Wei's hands made seal after seal and it took him no time to form the hundred and eight seals, he accomplished it so fast that only a blurry afterimage was visible. The primal energy flowed swiftly from his dantian to the rest of his body through the hundred and eight meridians at an incredible speed.

Two hours. In just two hours, a dantian full of raging energy was converted to pure and usable primal energy, Qi. And the purification process was working at twice the speed of before after adopting the new formula!

‘The legend must be true... There once was a Supreme within Ye's bloodline and the Falling Star form that was passed down from him was obviously incomplete. It makes sense now that I have seen this version of the Falling Stars form!’

‘Well i'm not sure if the Supreme was real, but at least the formula bit

of the story holds is!’

‘So a spectral being who resides on a mountain in my consciousness showed me the perfect Falling Star form, and basically gave our family a high Myst level formula!’

Ye Wei’s eyes were shining as he was surprised by the experience and overjoyed... His facial expression twisted a bit from being overwhelmed by all the emotions, but it was obvious he was very happy.

Improving the Falling Star form means the world to Ye Wei and the Ye family!

Inhale, exhale... It took quite a bit of time and many deep breaths before Ye Wei’s emotions subsided and he regained his calmness.

“My body is as strong as a one star Student’s can get and tomorrow I should be able to break through to two stars without the aid of these Fiery Sun Quencher pills!”

Ye Wei started his training again after mumbling to himself.

In the morning of his third day training, as the sun was glaring intensely a few drops of the golden sunshine landed on Ye Wei’s slightly childish face. He opened his eyes slowly and made a fist.

“Booom!”

He threw a punch to the air fiercely, the sound of wind breaking around his fist was sharp and loud. Ye Wei was more than satisfied and he was surprised by the immense strength behind the punch.

“So this is what it feels like being a two star Student?” The corners of Ye Wei’s eyes were slightly wet. It had been three whole years since he started at South Star Academy and this moment marked the end of an era. The era of Ye Wei, the one star Student who was stuck at the one star level for three years!

All the good news aside, the changes in one’s body condition was not exactly significant until a Student reaches five stars. When a Student reaches five stars, their skin and muscle will become hard as iron which

drastically improves their speed and strength by ten fold!

“Dad, mom, I broke through! Your child is a two star Student!” Ye Wei looked towards the direction of his home as his tears slowly left a warm reflective trail on his face.

No one can really empathise with Ye Wei, as the three years of struggle was very personal experience for him.

“I need to go home!”

Ye Wei can not wait to bring home the good news to his parents and his cousin Ye Zhong, who took care of him since before he could remember. He had skipped his lectures for two days already, what would one more day matter?

He packed light and hid the jade bottle of Fiery Sun Quenchers in a secret pocket in front of his chest. He closed the door behind him as he left his room and headed towards the school gate.

It was early morning and the students were already in the classroom and nobody was wandering around on the campus even though most tutors in South Star Academy were not very strict.

Facing the sun, Ye Wei walked out of the school gate on his way home.

Chapter 13: The Du Family

South Star Academy was located in the north-eastern corner of Green Moon City, whereas the Ye family Manor was positioned in the south-western corner. They are pretty much on the opposite side of town.

Although Ye Wei is now a two star Student with enhanced strength and speed compared to ordinary folk, it would still take around ten hours for him to get to the family manor on foot.

In Green Moon City, the three most popular means of transport were as follow: ordinary horse carriages, for a more expensive option one could use the beast carriages, and the most prestigious way to travel would be by runicles!

A normal horse carriage cost around one to three thousand silver, beast carriage around thirty to fifty thousand silver, but runicles are a bit special because you can't pay for their service.

Runicles are not pulled by horses or beasts. They are vehicles forged by rare metals, which were then engraved by Runemasters. The runes engraved onto the runicle draws primal energy from the sky and the earth, which powers it. Not only are runicles speedy, they also ride extremely stable, and runicle owners in Green Moon City could be counted with one hand.

The Ye family's chosen means of transport is a green-maned unicorn carriage worth forty thousand silver. Green-maned unicorns are a hybrid species, they are cross bred between unicorns and green-maned horses. In green-maned unicorns the green-maned horse's genes in the hybrid hinders the unicorn beast's violent nature, while its endurance and strength was retained. It was an entry-level beast for a carriage.

Ye Wei walked down the road with only himself for company, the scorching sun shone down sunlight and caused droplets of sweat to appear on his face. From time to time there were horse and beast carriages passing by. And then he saw a runicle, which pedestrians and carriages gave way to.

“One day, I will ride in a runicle!” Ye Wei whispered slightly envious.

Of course it was just a daydream now, as Ye Wei has not even traveled in the family beast carriage let alone him being able to ride in a runicle.

It was a balmy summer day, the temperature abnormally high and sadly with Ye Wei's two star cultivation, he couldn't even expel the heat out of his body with Qi, all he could do was grind his teeth and tolerate it. But thinking about seeing his family again put a smile on his childish face and made the hot conditions just a bit more tolerable.

By the time the sun started setting in the west Ye Wei had covered more than half of his journey. Meanwhile back at South Star Academy the school bell rang loud and clear. It was the end of school day and the midterm and South Star Academy students get a seven day break every three months.

As the bell rang, South Star Academy went from peaceful to hectic in an instant. Junior, intermediate, senior, and the one and only class of the gifted all came alive as students left the classrooms quickly heading out one after another to enjoy their break.

In the junior three classroom where the teacher just left, a group of senior students with overwhelming energy presence blocked the classroom door, the weakest being an eight star Student, and the alpha of the group who was dressed in a white robe was a very powerful and young individual, he was a Warrior!

The white robed youngster was Du Ming Ze, the strongest student in senior five, the fifteenth strongest student in whole of South Star Academy! And also at the same time an avid admirer of Lin Zi Yan!

Rumours of the of Ye Wei and Zi Yan's little venture has spread through every corner of South Star Academy, about how they were together at Green Phoenix Hall and how they were linking arms and holding hands.

This pack of Zi Yan's fanatic admirers were provoked like piranhas that just picked up the scent of blood, they didn't even rest until they had found out everything related to Ye Wei's identity. And three days was

more than enough time for the admirers to gather every gritty detail from people around campus.

“I am here to see Ye Wei, everyone else... leave!”

The group of senior students surrounded the white robed youth like they were bodyguards, his ice-cold eyes emotionlessly scanned through the faces of everyone in junior three.

“He is Du Ming Ze! The Du Ming Ze who is ranked fifteen on the South Star standings!”

“Leave the room! Just get out!”

“He is looking for Ye Wei? This time he is surely done for... How did he get into trouble with Du Ming Ze? Ming Ze is a Warrior! And the Du family is one of the three families, they basically run Green Moon City!”

“Even if Ye Wei has the talent to become a Runemaster, talent is just talent before he actually becomes a Runemaster, he can’t handle the Du family!”

Junior three students with bottomless respect looked at the youth in a white robe, and they started to sympathize with Ye Wei. They quieted down as the tension in the classroom built up. One by one, avoiding the middle of the room where Du Ming Ze stood the students almost held their breaths when exiting the room without making a sound.

‘Hahaha! Ye Wei, who will save you this time!?’

Xiao Qi appeared to be calm and collected, but he was bursting out in laughter inside.

Since Ye Wei displayed his potentials of becoming a Runemaster and turned his image upside down, Xiao Qi, even being the top student of junior three had no leverage to mess with Ye Wei. During these few days Xiao Qi had been frustrated and felt an extreme level of unease. Seeing Du Ming Ze here looking for trouble with Ye Wei soothed his need for revenge!

‘But Ye Wei had not attended any classes for three days, is that lucky gu

going to get away with it...' Xiao Qi looked at the empty chair Ye Wei usually sat in, shaking his head in regret.

'Ye Wei must be in his dorm room!' Xiao Qi's eyeballs spun around slowly and made a guess.

While a student is purifying primal energy, it's a written rule in South Star Academy that the student shall not be disturbed by anyone under any circumstances, not other students, not any member of staff. This is one of the main reason Xiao Qi assumed Ye Wei was training in his dorm room.

Moments after the class evacuated, Xiao Qi was left alone. Being the only junior in junior three that was left in the classroom!

"So you're Ye Wei?" The white robed Du Ming Ze's facial expression resembles a restless untamed mustang, as he posed the question in a chilling tone, his dark eyes looked like a merciless predator's.

"No no no! Ming Ze, brother, I am Xiao Qi, son of the senior five tutor Xiao Han Ji. I stayed here wanting to tell you that he hasn't shown up for lectures, I think he is hiding in his dorm room and I know where that is!"

Facing the ice-cold Du Ming Ze, Xiao Qi brown nosed without hesitation.

"Tutor Xiao's son?"

Du Ming Ze softened a little as he heard the familiar name, he is the proud understudy of senior five's tutor Xiao.

"So when Miss Zi Yan was substituting for our class, not only did that bastard Ye Wei sleep through half of her lecture, he screamed and shouted when he woke up. He angered Miss Zi Yan and towards the end of lecture he criticised Miss Zi Yan's stance, saying it was flawed and embarrassing her in front of the whole class. I never liked that kid! If he didn't show the potential to be a Runemaster..."

Xiao Qi walked close to Du Ming Ze as he trashed talked and made Ye Wei sound as bad as possible. He stopped the moment he realised he shouldn't say anything about Ye Wei's shocking display.

It's common knowledge the Du family was one of the 'Big Three' in Green Moon City. What Xiao Qi didn't know, however was that the Du family's willingness to provoke potential Runemasters. It would be against Xiao Qi's interest if Ming Ze refused to mess with Ye Wei because of the Du family wanting to befriend upcoming Runemasters. Xiao Qi realised he said too much, and he was now looking for ways to explain himself.

"Little Xiao Qi, I don't like people who are indirect and I also dislike hearing half a sentence!"

Du Ming Ze looked at Xiao Qi, his thick sword-shaped eyebrows were dark as black ink, they tilted up slightly showing Xiao Qi he was not pleased with the partial truth he was told. The presence only a Warrior has pressed down onto Xiao Qi like a forcefield.

Xiao Qi was finding it hard to breath against the mountain like presence of Du ming Ze, he actually got knocked off balance and had to take a few steps back, before he could regain his balance and stand up straight. His body covered with cold sweat, Xiao Qi casted his eyes on Ming Ze with utmost respect.

"Ming Ze, brother, Ye Wei acquired knowledge about runes from god knows where, and answered a few question in Miss Zi Yan's lecture correctly which made her think he had the talent to become a Runemaster. Then Miss Zi Yan took him away from the classroom after the lecture. That's.. that's all I know. If you want to get to Ye Wei's dorm room, though I can show you the way there!" Xiao Qi said carefully and tried to avoid eye contact with Du ming Ze, "It's school break now and nobody will be guarding the residence halls!" Xiao Qi added.

"Lead the way!" Du Ming Ze was satisfied from what he heard for the time being, he nodded and walked up next to Xiao Qi patting his shoulders: "If anyone is looking for trouble with you in South Star Academy, you can drop my name anytime you want!" Du Ming Ze expressed his appreciation towards the helpfulness of tutor Xiao's son.

"Thank you"

Xiao Qi was flattered and he nodded. Although both Xiao's parents were tutors at South Star it is an inconvenience for tutors to interfere and take sides in disputes between students. Not only is Du Ming Ze a direct Du descendant, he is also a Warrior and the fifteenth strongest person on the South Star rankings, there was no better patron than Du Ming Ze.

While having these thought and being proud of his new connection, Xiao Qi led Ming Ze and his gang to Ye Wei's room.

"Here we are!"

Xiao Qi pointed at a shut door after they entered the building and said excitedly.

Du Ming Ze didn't say a word he just nodded. With his eyes, he signaled the gang of senior students to break and enter, the act was prohibited in South Star Academy but the residence halls was not staffed today due to the break, the place was basically unmonitored!

Bang!

The tall and sturdily built eight star Student stepped forward towards Ye Wei's room, he punched the door ferociously with his enormous fist.

Boom!!

The door split open with a muffled rumble. There was nobody inside and there was nothing in the tight space except a wooden bed and a simple wooden table.

"He's not here?"

Xiao Qi was dumbfounded by the fact that Ye Wei was not in his room!

"Break them!"

Du Ming Ze said furiously, he stared at the empty room with a gloomy face.

"Yea!"

Without hesitation, the gang of seniors initiated the destructive act. There wasn't much to wreck in the room and it only took them seconds to

turn everything into ruins.

Despite this Du Ming Ze was still not satisfied by the poor state of Ye Wei's room and he commanded everyone to piss on Ye Wei's bedding before he led them out of the room.

Chapter 14: The Ye Family

After trashing Ye Wei's room and emptying themselves, Du Ming Ze and his gang left Ye Wei's room behind.

A few hours later, Ye Wei finally arrived at the Ye Manor's front gate after walking through the streets that were lit up by starlight.

The Ye family was not quite that known in Green Moon City, but they were relatively well established in the southwestern district as their manor encompassed ten acres of bright and open land. The blood-red wooden gate was adorned with two well polished copper ring handles. Two grand marble lion statues decorated each side of the gate and standing in front were four sharp looking guards dressed in fancy uniforms.

To regular citizens, the Ye manor looked grand and majestic, but to Ye Wei it did not. He frowned in confusion as he looked at the four guards.

"Ehm, Why are there only four guards guarding the gate?"

Social status was very important for most families, and the strength, or more importantly the quantity, of guards symbolized the power and influence a family held; it was a show of vanity, after all.. 'Usually there are eight four star Students guarding the gates. Why are there only four guards today?'

"Master Ye Wei!" They all called out.

The guards bowed and greeted the young master of the household. Ye Wei nodded back, wondering what happened to the rest of the guards as he headed towards the courtyard.

He stopped, however, when he overheard a loud conversation whilst entering the courtyard.

"Fu Shun, why is he only getting fifty silver? Our little Ye Wei is living and studying at South Star Academy, how could fifty silver possibly be enough? Don't we normally send him a hundred and fifty silver? Why are we only giving him one third of what he usually receives?"

“Madame, truth be told, the family... We don’t have much money left! The master even sold his green-maned unicorn with the carriage and he had to let go of a handful of guards...”

“What?! This is outrageous! Are we really in such a desperate position?” Being on the other side of the wall, Ye Wei could only hear the muffled voices intermittently due to the noisy street. He frowned in puzzlement upon understanding what was being said...

The Ye family had always been financially stable and actually didn’t do too bad for themselves. Hearing about the financial instability of their family and how the master of the house sold his beast carriage, Ye Wei was shocked to the extreme as this had to be a fantasy.

Although Ye Wei had almost no presence in the Ye family, the family never forgot about him. His allowance always arrived on time and everyone in the family was very friendly towards him.

“Creak...”

Ye Wei, despite the heaviness he felt, pushed open the wooden door in front of the little yard.

“Pa, Ma, I’m home!” he said as he walked towards the house.

“Little Wei!”

The front door popped open, and a woman in her thirties threw herself at Ye Wei. She was plainly dressed, but it worked together with her light and natural makeup complimenting her well as she gave off a warm and pleasant air.

She was Ye Wei’s mother, Joe Wan!

“Young master Ye Wei has returned.” Fu Shun, the butler, stood beside Joe Wan and respectfully greeted Ye Wei as he squeezed a smile out of his tired face.

Ye Wei was not naturally talented – not in his built nor his Sentient. The Ye family, with that in mind, did not mock or bully him. He was just inadvertently ignored from time to time because he had no chance of

becoming a Warrior. The elders' focus in the family fell on the more talented kids his age.

The Ye family didn't have to worry about having a roof over their heads or food on the table, but these new internal and external problems made it more important than ever to stick together.

"Mister Fu!" Ye Wei was happy to see familiar faces again and greeted the butler with a smile on his face.

"Ma'am, excuse me."

Fu Shun left the grey money pouch with Ye Wei's mom, then bowed and left the house.

"Little Wei, why are you so sweaty? Did you walk all the way home? Come sit here and rest. You silly child, how many times do I have to tell you that the journey is too long a walk for your body? You should have just rented a horse carriage for this trip. It's just money, our family is fine and eating well!" Joe Wan raised her eyes and gazed at her son, nagged him while looking for a handkerchief for his sweaty face then she poured him a cup of tea.

"Where's dad?" Ye Wei asked, glancing at the deflated money pouch butler Fu left his mom and started imagining the horrible situation in his head.

"Your father has been busy dealing with family business. He hasn't been home for five days now he's working on something... Don't worry about him. Are you hungry? Mommy will go make you some food," Joe Wan said with a smile.

Currently, the seventy-two year old three star condensing prime stage Warrior Ye Zheng Qing, Ye Wei's grandfather, was the head of the family.

Ye Zheng Qing had four sons and three daughters. Ye Wei's father, Ye Yi, was the oldest among his siblings and was responsible for the Ye family's cloth trade. The oldest and second oldest sons were responsible for mystic arms and scrolls respectively, while the youngest son ran a

restaurant. All three of Zheng Qing's daughters except the youngest aunt were married.

"Mom, I'm not hungry stop making a fuss. Is the family doing okay?" Ye Wei couldn't stand his mother acting as if everything was fine, as he stood up and looked right into his mother's eyes as he asked sincerely.

Ye Wei saw and felt something was not right with the family, having overheard the conversation between his mom and the butler, Ye Wei came to a conclusion: The Ye family is going through a crisis!

And it was not a minor one, or his father would not be away for five days, nor would they have only four guards at the front gate instead of normal eight, nor would grandad have sold his green-maned unicorn and carriage!

"My child, why are you worrying about these little matters? You should just pay attention in school and focus on your own problems!" Joe Wan wanted to change the topic, flustered her eyes were darting around.

"Mom, I am grown up and Ye is my last name so the family's business is my business!" Ye Wei declared solemnly in a deep voice while keeping eye contact with his mom.

"Oh my child, if you insist..." Joe Wan walked to her son. Patting his head and sighed, mumbling to herself as she was still a little hesitant wondering if it was the correct thing to do, being completely open to Ye Wei.

"Have you heard of the Du family?" Joe Wan asked after taking a deep breath.

"The Du's are one of the 'Big Three' in Green Moon City, right? Is our family business being challenged by the Du's?" Ye Wei asked with a big frown on his forehead.

"Unfortunately," His mom nodded.

"Mystic scrolls, arms, restaurant, cloth and the horse ranch, everything was affected, especially our scoll business, seventy percent of our family's revenue comes from scrolls. The Du family just hired a Runemaster's first

apprentice to personally inscribe all the scrolls in their shops. Whereas the scrolls on our shelves were inscribed by a regular student from the Runemasters' Union. On top of that, they are undercutting our price by thirty percent, the scrolls are basically stuck on our shelves." Joe Wan was upset and it was visible all over her face.

"We had to lower the price because the scrolls weren't selling. but we won't be making any profit on them. We are not as wealthy as the Du family, they can use their money like this to hit the Ye family's business, but we can't do anything about it!"

"We have been struggling for two months now and the family is running low on resources, your grandpa even had to sell his unicorn carriage. It is a crisis like none we have faced before."

"Little Wei, your grandpa, dad, and uncles are supporting the family so you should not worry about the ins and outs of everything just focus and practice on your studies at South Star. Because only when you are strong will you be able to help the family, when you are as strong as say... your cousin, Ye Zhong!

"Nor should you worry or feel guilty about your expenses if worse comes to worst your mom's dowry will be enough to support you until you finish your education!"

Joe Wan patted her son's shoulder, trying to comfort and reassured him with transparency and proposing a backup plan.

"Why did the Du family do this to us all of a sudden? Did one of us step on their toes?"

Ye Wei wasn't really worried about his expenses. All he cared about was his family's wellbeing, because he knew he could trust Lin Zi Yan to put in a good word with the right people and that she will inform the vice principal when school starts again, which could possibly score him a scholarship making money not a problem.

'There are around three hundred people under the Ye's roofs including family members and employees, if the family collapsed what would grandpa do? What would dad and my uncles do?'

Ye Wei felt the weight on his shoulders wishing to be of help in the dire situation.

‘Although I am just a two star Student, and though I am far from as useful as my cousin Ye Zhong, I should be able to do something with my excellent soul sensitivity!

It’s not impossible for the family to get out of this slump, what bothered Ye Wei was the mysterious motive behind these economic attacks from one of The Big Three. The Ye family is hardly big enough to be considered a threat to the Du family and their bullying simply did not make sense.

“We didn’t and are in no position to mess with them, the dispute started when grandpa refused to sell our plot of land next to North Hill Bay. That land was passed down through generation after generation selling it was out of the question for your grandpa, which was more than reasonable and should be respected. Do you understand?”

“Ever since the refusal, the Du family started to take action against us. They started by ruining the restaurant, horse ranch, and other minor sources of income which was not a huge problem. But two months ago they started undercutting our scroll business, the lifeblood of the Ye family!” Joe Wan was filled with indignation.

“What kind of behavior is that!?”

Ye Wei too, got emotional. ‘Just because you want to buy it we have to sell it? That is a disgusting attitude! They know very well that plot of land belonged to us since forever and that our family’s tomb is there at North Hill Bay. I know technically it’s grandpa’s decision not to sell it, but I am sure the rest of the family would think the same in the name of our heritage and family history!’

“Don’t worry about it son we have something to celebrate tonight! Your little aunt Ye Jing Jing has broken through, she just became a seven star Warrior, and we are throwing a dinner party tonight for the occasion!” His mom smiled.

“Little aunt is that good now?!”

Ye Wei too, smiled enthusiastically. Like star levels with Students, breaking through the fifth and seventh star level are major obstacles, but the power one gain after breaking through is significant.

Students can perform stances once they reach seven stars. When Warriors reach the seven star level they gain a thin layer of Qi, primal feathers, which will permanently cover their body as an extra layer of armor, and it grants them the ability to levitate making them stronger and faster fighters!

Some say it takes more than a dozen six star Warriors to take down a seven star Warrior.

Ye Jing Jing was Ye Wei's youngest aunt, she was twenty-five years old and she is even more gifted than Ye Zhong, because condensing prime stage was within reach for her now that she is a seven star, only three stars away!

To establish a family, getting to condensing prime stage was an unwritten cultivation requirement, and there were only two Warriors at that stage in the entire family: grandpa, a three star condense prime Warrior and big uncle Ye Hai at one star.

Other than his parents, Ye Jing Jing was the closest to Ye Wei in his family because of this Ye Wei was ecstatic about his little aunt's progress.

Chapter 15: Dinner Party

Night fell quickly upon the Ye manor. The halls and corridors were heavily decorated with big, red, festive lanterns that brightened the mood and interior. In the banquet hall, the leading figures of the family wore long-lost smiles.

With the recent events, the leaders of the family had nothing but struggles and obstacles to overcome, and it was pleasant and refreshing having something to celebrate.

In the spacious banquet hall, grandpa Ye Zheng Qing was sitting at the family head's seat, right at the head of the table. The old man was surrounded by an aura of power. He was around seventy years of age, and although all his hair had long since turned white, his face had a healthy, red glow, which showed he was in great shape, due to his cultivation and years of training.

To his left was Ye Wei's big uncle, Ye Hai; second uncle, Ye Han; his dad, Ye Yi; and little uncle, Ye Yu. To his right were the talents of the younger generation: little aunt, Ye Jing Jing; male cousins: Ye Zhong and Ye Xuan; and the female cousins: Ye Qiu and Ye Ling.

Big uncle, Ye Hai, was a one star condensing prime Warrior, while his dad, Ye Yi, and uncles, Ye Han and Ye Yu, were all ten star Warriors.

For big family dinners, like this evening's, the seating plan was very detailed and well thought out – the stronger one was the closer they would be seated to the head of the house. Less talented individuals, like Ye Wei, were placed in the corners of the hall which was next to his mother. Despite the clear segregation, the family members had healthy relationships between one another, unlike other big families where the less important members could rarely join a conversation between the stronger members and elders.

Ye Wei's eyes were focused on the person sitting at the head of the table, as he was admiring Ye Zheng Qing's aura. Although he had the eyes of a strong, experienced eagle, the skin around them showed a slight

weariness. 'It must be the recent drama,' Ye Wei thought.

He felt a bit uneasy and helpless and wished he could share his grandfather's burdens.

"This is the first dinner party we've had in more than three months! We are all gathered here today to celebrate Jing Jing's seven star Warrior breakthrough!" Ye Zheng Qing's masculine voice echoed throughout the fully seated banquet hall.

Ye Zheng Qing patted his youngest daughter's shoulder, feeling very proud. He raised his head to look at his family: "I hope all the young folks can be motivated and inspired by Jing Jing. Train hard and become something to bring honor to our family!"

"Congratulations, little sis! The Ye family has gained a seven star Warrior, let's toast! To my little sister!" Ye Hai stood up and said, raising his glass with a big grin on his face.

"You are a condensed stage Warrior, I still have a long way to go!" Ye Jing Jing raised her glass and emptied it into her mouth simultaneously.

"Indeed, you're not at big brother's level, but you're going to overtake me soon, right? Let your second oldest brother offer you another drink!" Ye Han laughed and raised his glass.

"Thank you, brother!" Jing Jing emptied another glass without hesitation at all.

Ye Jing Jing was very straightforward with everything, even masculine in some ways. She was very different compared to the ladylike women in other big families: twenty-six, unmarried, and still living in the family manor. She had a great personality, a people person, and she was usually the third in command after grandpa and Ye Hai, making decisions and taking care of the family when those two were away.

Little aunt has always taken care of Ye Wei since he was a toddler; she once said "I will take care of the young ones in the family and help you kids establish yourselves, even if it means not getting married! Watching you grow is a great cause, and I will be satisfied and pleased." He had

always thought that little aunt was kidding, but as he thought about it his eyes got a bit wet upon seeing her still standing by her words after all these years.

Little aunt was truly a family woman.

“Dig in!” The big and harmonious family put a smile on Ye Zheng Qing’s aging face as he picked up his chopsticks and started the feast.

There was great joy throughout the banquet hall, but everyone had a common and unspoken worry, thus they were not fully relaxed. The bitterness could be felt, seeing as there was a family crisis going on, after all.

Everyone ate and chatted, trying to temporarily put the negativity aside.

When Ye Wei was half full, he excused himself and went outside for some fresh summer air, theorising ways in which he could use his rune knowledge to help his family get out of this unfavourable position. With his gift and Lin Zi Yan’s referral, Ye Wei should be skilled enough to become a disciple of master Yi.

There were only three Runemasters who lived in Green Moon City, and master Yi was the best and most respected of the three. If Ye Wei became his disciple, it would greatly improve the family’s reputation.

Ye Wei considered this possibility and decided that this would be his course of action. He clenched his fist tightly in determination, ready to turn this crisis around.

Big uncle Ye Hai also came out to the courtyard, heading straight towards Ye Wei while he was lost in deep thought.

Among relationships between his uncles, Ye Wei got along the worst with his big uncle Ye Hai. Ye Hai was always harsh and strict with Ye Wei. This contributed to Ye Wei’s fear of being close to and opening up to his big uncle.

Noticing Ye Hai approaching, Ye Wei lowered his head, trying to avoid possible eye contact, and thought of an escape plan.

“Ye Wei, where are you going!” Ye Hai shouted. He was not going to let his nephew get away.

“Big uncle...” Ye Wei unwillingly greeted him.

“Shouldn’t you be at South Star Academy right now? What on earth do you think you’re doing here?” Ye Hai was slightly irritated by Wei’s presence.

“I...” Ye Wei tried to explain himself but got cut off.

“Don’t tell me you skipped school? Could you put more effort into studying and breakthrough to the two star level?” Ye Hai questioned earnestly with a rough tone: “Your cultivation is the worst among the new generation! All your younger siblings and cousins have overtaken you!”

Ye Wei wanted to declare that he had broken through to the two star level, but the words would not come out of his mouth. He noticed Ye Hai’s stern face and looked down at the ground again: “Yea, I will try my best!” He wanted to surprise his uncle with actions to prove his worth and shut up Ye Hai without using words.

Ye Hai was somewhat eased by Ye Wei’s submissive acceptance to his scolding: “At least you are listening. I will let you off for now. Our family is not doing too great at the moment, so your generation should train harder and contribute more to the family as soon as possible!”

Ye Wei didn’t think big uncle would let him off the hook so easily, so he left the scene immediately. Having felt Ye Hai’s disappointment, Ye Wei was desperate to get stronger as fast as he could!

‘In your minds I have always been the worst, a bottom dweller. Well that is going to change, just you watch.’ Ye Wei swore to himself.

After Ye Wei walked pretty far, he turned a corner on his way back to the banquet. Right before he was about to leave Ye Hai’s sight was when he caught something out of the corner of his eye. He stood still behind the wall next to him and peered forward.

Three figures stood there in the dead of night, in the deserted courtyard where his uncle had been standing; they were the three leaders of the Ye

family.

“Ye Hai, how is the scroll business looking?” Ye Zheng Qing asked with a low pitched voice. He cut to the chase, hoping to have a better picture of how the most important issue was progressing.

“We lowered the retail price by thirty percent, but the figures are still suboptimal. There are more scrolls in the shop than there are customers.” Ye Hai sounded slightly depressed. “Scrolls the Du family sell can dish out thirty percent of the original stance’s energy, whereas our scrolls can only output up to twenty percent. They’re not selling any better, even with the price cut.”

A bitter smile emerged on Ye Hai’s face; despite his best efforts, the scroll business remained irreparable.

He uncle was the macho man of the family, and after hearing how washed up Ye Hai sounded, Ye Wei now realised how bad the situation really was.

“Han, how is the arms trade?” The head shifted his focus on to his second oldest son, who was responsible the other field.

The Ye family had its fingers in many different businesses, but arms and scrolls had always been the most profitable two!

“The Du family undercuts us by forty percent, only two pieces left our doors in the past two months! And one of master Yi’s men sent a message regarding the cancellation of our redistribution rights, if we don’t sell their goods. They will find another distributor!” Ye Han looked anxious, both of the family’s most profitable businesses were retail of others’ work, and the risk of getting cut off was increasing.

“The Big Three indeed, ruthless moves!”

“They are taking this too damn far!”

Chapter 16: The White Tiger's Assault

“Pa, what should we do next?” Ye Hai frowned and asked.

“The foundations of our family’s establishments took a few hundred years to build. If we are to collapse now, we’ll have to move out of the manor and spread out all across the city... Our enemies will take this chance attack us!” Ye Zheng Qing let out a long deep sigh and looked up into the sky and thought: ‘This is an enormous world. Is there somewhere our Ye family can just live in peace?’

“The land in North Hill Bay belongs to the Ye Family. Our ancestors were buried there. I will never give up our ancestral land. No matter what happens, I will defend it with my life!”

Ye Wei was still standing behind the wall while they were talking, eavesdropping, and the conversation got heavier and heavier. He felt insecure because the thought of his family losing its integrity was frightening, but the thought of losing the only place he could ever call home was unsettling.

“There are not a lot of options left... We shall agree to the duel posed by the Du family!” Ye Zheng Qing took a gold plated letter of challenge from his pocket: “A messenger from the Du family delivered this letter of challenge. The event shall be in three days, where the younger generation of our families shall fight against each other! If we win the duel, the Du family has promised that they will stop interfering with our family’s businesses, but if we lose, we will have to sell our ancestral land to them!”

“That is out of the question!” Ye Hai said anxiously. “The strongest youngster we have is a four star Warrior, but the Du family’s youngsters have already become five Star Warriors. The strongest of them, Du Yue Han, is even a six star Warrior!”

“We cannot have Ye Zhong take this impossible task!” Ye Han frowned. He knew that the Ye family had little chance at winning and there was no way that they could risk the loss of their most talented youngster.

“I will train privately with Ye Zhong until the duel. Either way, one of

our youngsters has to take on this challenge. Even if we lose, we can say at the least that we've tried our best. There is no other way out of this dilemma!" The head of the family made this tough decision, as the family was completely cornered by this crisis.

Ye Hai and Ye Han felt helpless and dejected. Their Ye family might fall very and they could do nothing to stop it.

"Let's put that aside for now. We also have to plan for the worst outcome: If we lose the duel, our old foes will be at the doorstep the moment they hear the news of our loss. We must send the young ones to Ning City, where they should be safe with the Yang family." Ye Zheng Qing felt crushed. Having to split the family up was his worst nightmare.

"Father..." Ye Han clenched his fist as he saw his father's face.

Ye Hai was speechless. After some consideration, he broke his silence: "This will be the right move if we lose the duel. I'm not worried about most of the kids, but my young nephew Ye Wei... He's not a talented child. The other children will survive and find their own way even if they're under a different roof. They're strong enough to work simple jobs, like being a guard, and eventually have their own small families. With Ye Wei, it won't be that easy. He has a red Sentient, and I'm quite sure he will be excluded regardless of our good relationship with the Yangs. He is protected by the Ye family, and we provide for him so he can live a carefree life and not worry about food and clothes... It won't be this simple if he has to live under another roof!"

Having heard his big uncle's confession, Ye Wei was breathless. Two lines of tears fell from his red eyes.

Ye Wei always thought that his big uncle was the worst-tempered and the meanest of his uncles – the uncle who disliked him the most. He never thought Uncle Ye Hai cared about him and his future that much!

Ye Wei's heart was suddenly filled with guilt. He had always misunderstood his uncle who had always been strict with him for the noblest intention!

'I was a child who didn't care about anything outside my little bubble,

but in difficult times like this... As grandpa said, it's about time the young ones take on some responsibility. I will defend the Ye family to my final breath! I have to do my part in keeping our loved ones close together. I won't sit back and watch us get separated! I swear I won't let this happen!" With the back of his hand, he wiped the tears away and firmly walked away. Slowly, Ye Wei's figure disappeared into the dark of the night.

Soon after that talk, Ye Zheng Qing announced the duel with the Du family in front of the family at the banquet.

Upon hearing the news, the majority of the family members' faces became pale with fear for the family's future. Although Ye Zhong, the strongest of the younger generation in the Ye family, was fairly famous in Green Moon City, his opponent would be a six Star Warrior. Fame would not even out the two star level difference in power!

"Our Ye family has no other choice..." Grandpa looked at the disapproving faces of the family members and sighed. He looked as if he were ten years older for a brief moment.

"This is outrageous!" Aunt Jing Jing violently smashed the table and stood up. She shouted: "I will take on the Du family myself!" For a moment, she looked like a rampaging demon who would kill without hesitation... Her pretty face was bright red, but it was unclear whether it was from rage or alcohol.

"Father, is there no other way? Can't we discuss this matter with master Yi? I don't see Ye Zhong winning this duel, and the land at North Hill Bay is at stake. Our ancestors' remains were buried there for crying out loud!" Ye Wei's dad, Ye Wi, stood up and sought to stop this madness.

The most respected Runemaster in Green Moon City, Master Yi, actually had connections with the Ye family. If he were to be the peacemaker, even the Du family would have to stand down!

"Master Yi..." Grandpa shook his head with a bitter smile on his face: "Master Yi's prestigious status comes with tight schedules and security concerns. It's not so easy to arrange a meeting with him, even as the head

of one of the Big Three. This matter is too urgent. Do you really think I could convince Master Yi to help us in a couple days?"

"Gramps. When is the Du Family coming over?" Ye Zhong had held his tongue until now. He now spoke each word loud and clear in a declaratory manner.

"For the ancestral land, I would give my life before giving up! I am the strongest in the younger generation and we need a strong leader in this moment of crisis!" Ye Zhong cracked his knuckles as he said these words.

"In three days!" Grandpa replied. He could see the recklessness in Ye Zhong's posture, so he added:" Little Zhong, just do your best. There will always be a winner and a loser, and nobody in this hall will blame you. What you must not do is let your emotions control you. You are the one with the most potential in our family. I can picture you taking over for me one day and becoming the master of this family!" Ye Zheng Qing was clearly worried about Ye Zhong's hot-headedness

"Of course! Gramps, dad, uncles and aunts, I will head back now!" Ye Zhong nodded and turned around, heading out of the hall.

"Cousin!"

Ye Wei watched his cousin walking away, visibly stressed with clenched hands. The family's future was in his cousin's hands; he couldn't imagine how much pressure Ye Zhong was under right now, how much weight there was on his poor cousin's shoulders.

Ye Zhong had always been a supportive figure to Ye Wei since he was a young boy. Namingly, after the entry exam to South Star Academy, upon hearing the bad news about his red Sentient, his big cousin was there to comfort and motivate him patiently and caringly.

'Big Cousin is likely to risk his life for the family, but what about me? Can't I do anything but sit in the corner quietly and watch this unfold? No, I have to do something! I will not allow anyone to plot against my family, nor will I let anybody hurt my cousin!' Ye Wei remembered how he perfected Triple Tidal Palm and helped Zi Yan acquire cosmic energy, thus allowing her to break through to become a Warrior. He planned to

help Ye Zhong with his training and perfect his stances, improving his cultivation and the chance of victory!

‘I’ll have to give this a go!’ Ye Wei raised his head slowly and clenched his fists.

After the feast, Ye Wei and his parents left the banquet hall and walked back to their house together.

“Little Wei, you should be tired from the trip home right? Get some rest, son.” Ye Yi patted his son’s head, sounding a bit down, which was probably because of the announcement at the dinner party.

“Of course! Ma, pa, you two should get some rest soon too!” Ye Wei nodded agreeingly and made his way back to his room while his parents returned to theirs.

The night was getting darker and darker. Dim, flickering tea lights in the lanterns made the quiet walkways and corridors in the manor look slightly frightening. A midnight breeze gently blew past the tealights and leaves on the trees, the sizzling leaves seemed a bit tired in the darkness.

Silence fell as the wind slowly died down as the starlight was fading, leaving the moon on her own. Ye Wei was appreciating the peaceful and gorgeous night sky while walking in the dark path towards Ye Zhong’s residence with the moonlight’s guidance.

Ye Zhong was relatively independent. He was no longer living with his parents, but in a separate quarter by himself. As expected, he was training very hard in the courtyard.

‘How long has he been doing this?’ Ye Wei peeped through the gate into the courtyard, and he saw that his cousin was surrounded by heavy, white mist.

It was a cloud of evaporated sweat!

Ye Zhong was performing the high spirit-level stance White Tiger’s Assault repeatedly, and the drain of will-force and Qi made him have a pale complexion and caused him to gasp heavily.

A high spirit level stance was a Warrior's limit. The White Tiger's Assault was the most powerful among the sixteen high spirit level stances that the Ye family had and it was also what Ye Zhong was best at.

There were significant strength differences between the stances. Simple, advanced, peak and forbidden, from weakest to strongest, were the four sublevels.

Forbidden stances existed and were extremely powerful, but generally avoided, as performing them could be harmful to a Warrior's mind and body akin a double edged blade.

The White Tiger's Assault belonged to the peak level. It was easily one of the strongest stances a Warrior could master at Ye Zhong's level.

The dim moonlight was the only reason anything was visible and in the dark, Ye Zhong drew an interwinding web of runes around his steaming body.

The web of runes quickly shrunk, with him as the centre, and formed a large cat, a tiger as white as the first snow!

Although Ye Wei was standing quite a distance from outside the courtyard, his skin could feel the force emitting from the cat from more than twenty feet away. A wave of pressure tightened Ye Wei's chest. It was getting harder and harder to breathe and a chill went down his spine. He was suddenly enveloped by inexplicable fear.

Ye Wei remained calm as he could while staring at the white tiger levitating over his cousin's head.

The mountain emerged in Ye Wei's consciousness and a golden light shone through the surface of his red Sentient that was slightly visible deep in his dark iris.

'Two nodes out of the hundred and thirty-six runes can be improved. If my big cousin's Qi could flow through them quicker and in sync with the other nodes, the White Tiger's Assault can become significantly stronger.' Ye Wei's eyes brightened up like shining stars in a bright, night sky.

'Two flaws! I will figure out how to polish the stance and cousin

Zhong's best stance will become much better once it's been perfected!

Chapter 17: Minor Changes

Ye Wei wasn't confident about repeating what he did when he was with Lin Zi Yan before actually spotting the errors in his cousin's stance, but now his body and mind were ready to refine and perfect the White Tiger's Assault. After all, helping his cousin would be the only way for him to contribute to the Ye family's last stand!

Excited and euphoric, Ye Wei placed his hand on the gate as he leaned forward to have a closer look at his cousin's training. The gate moved an inch as he put his weight onto it and squeaked.

The squeak the gate made was just loud enough to surprise Ye Wei causing him to panic and immediately pull his hand off the gate.

"Show yourself!"

Ye Zhong was focused and tensed while his eyes were ice-cold when he asked the intruder to identify himself. He bent his knees slightly and tensed up his calves. Then, he launched himself and within the blink of an eye he was already at the gate, charging in a way akin to a tiger ambushing one from above.

The heightened hearing of a four star Warrior could easily pick up the squeak, it was not surprising that Ye Zhong could hear him.

Ye Zhong's hand was glowing bright red as he pulled it towards his chest like a loaded cannon ready to be fired. If he released his strike, the door would, without a doubt, turn into dust and Ye Wei, who was right behind it, would meet the same fate.

"Cousin Zhong, it's me!" He shouted while realizing that this could be the last moment of his life, which caused Ye Wei to be covered in cold sweat in a rush of terror.

"Ye Wei, is that you?"

Ye Zhong recognized the familiar voice coming from behind the gate. 'The owner of it should be friendly.' This idea surfaced in his consciousness just before the point of no return, so he stopped his attack

before it hit him. However, the recoil from the attack took its toll on his body, causing his face to become a little pale.

“Squeak!”

He opened the gate, while not being able to decide if he should laugh or cry as looked at Ye Wei who looked like an injured critter resting on the ground, “Ye Wei, it is way past your bedtime, why are you wandering around? Do you know that you could have been seriously injured a moment ago?”

Ye Zhong rubbed his little cousin’s scalp and told him off with a fake, serious face.

“The weather is horrible today. The heat is fine, but the humidity kept me up so I decided to take a walk and get some fresh air. My feet lead me here somehow, I don’t even know how I got here!” Ye Wei came up with a random excuse, while scratching the back of his head and smiling.

“You little rascal come on in!”

Ye Zhong reluctantly shook his head with an amused look in his eyes as he closed the gate behind them while dragging Ye Wei into his courtyard.

“Du Han Yue is a six star Warrior. Cousin, are you nervous about the fight tomorrow?” Ye Wei innocently posed the obvious question to his now extremely pale and tired relative.

“What do you know about it!” He replied and knocked his little cousin in the forehead with his knuckles. Then, he looked at the beautiful silver moon in the night sky. The moon’s light reflected off his face and revealed his anxiousness.

Nervous?

As a four star Warrior, having to physically confront a well known genius, the young six star Warrior Du Yue Han of Green Moon City with their family’s ancestral land at stake, who wouldn’t be nervous?

Just thinking about the consequences of failing was enough to make it difficult for one to breath!

“Cousin, you were performing the White Tiger’s Assault right? That’s an impressive high spirit level stance! I wish I was as strong as you... I can’t even make stances!”

“Could you maybe show it to me again? I want to see it close up.” Ye Wei looked at Ye Zhong with a fire in his eyes while scratching his head because he was shy from his overenthusiasm and questions.

Worried he might have gotten it wrong, Ye Wei wanted to verify the flaws he spotted a moment ago.

“If you work hard enough, you can and will be able to do stances!” Ye Zhong knew that talent was a sensitive topic for the mediocre Ye Wei, so he patted him on the shoulders as he motivated him with words. ‘With his red Sentient, nobody really knows how long he will need to become a seven star Student... Ten? Twenty? Thirty years?’

“You should take a few steps back.” Ye Zhong could not refuse the request from his little cousin.

“Roger that!”

Ye Wei nodded his head enthusiastically as he stepped back around approximately ten meters. He opened his eyes wide this time and watched his cousin, waiting for the white tiger to strike.

“Zap!”

Ye Wei saw this process before, but when comparing to Zi Yan, Ye Zhong did every step with much more flare. The will-force on his finger was much more dense and the Qi on the will-force was thicker. He drew rune after rune like it was second nature.

In a matter of seconds, Ye Zhong was surrounded by the hundred and thirty-six freshly-drawn runes, shrouded by the blurry shining runes which caused him to look mysterious and almost angelic.

Here it was, White Tiger’s Assault!

Ye Zhong uttered a cry, causing the hundred and thirty-six spots of light to wrap around his body quickly as they came closer to one another.

Rawr!

The white tiger roared ferociously, as if it was a beast that had descended from the heavens themselves. The pressure wave it produced spread and quickly, like a mini tsunami travelling across the courtyard, the fallen leaves were picked up by turbulence produced by the stance and were blown away until stopped by the walls of the courtyard. The pressure even knocked Ye Wei off balance despite being ten meters away. The overpowering pressure wave shook his body and he staggered for a while before finally regaining balance after taking six steps back.

‘I can see it clearly now!’

There was a golden flash deep in Ye Wei’s eyes for a single moment when he was analysing the runes that formed the stance, his dark eyes focusing onto the two wrong nodes within the stance.

‘This one is hidden much better than in the other stance. How should I perfect this and let cousin Zhong know?’ Ye Wei frowned, as he tried to figure out how to tell his cousin.

‘If I just tell him there are two mistakes in the White Tiger’s Assault stance there’s no way he will believe it. He’s just going to think I’m crazy.’ He tried to figure out how to send the message in a subtle manner so as to not reveal his abilities.

“That was astounding!” Ye Wei took a deep breath and went on with his play. He attempted to look jealous and astonished as he approached his cousin, “Cousin, is the order and position of those runes set? Would the stance still work if you for example, swap this one and that one around?”

Hearing Ye Wei’s outlandish question, Ye Zhong went silent and then laughed: “Of course they are fixed, little cousin. The masters who invented the art of stances thought thoroughly regarding the position and sequential order of the runes of each stance; they are optimise to their fullest in order to promote synergy between the runes. If you swap them around, either it wouldn’t work or it would be less powerful than before which is undesirable!”

“Ah ha! I’ve heard that Warriors can manipulate mystic runes, but you

know how far away I am from that level, right cousin? But I want to see it and had that idea, so I can grasp the feel of it... Ye Wei was trying to take full advantage of his puppy dog eyes, using them to manipulate his caring cousin: "Don't you want to show me how it's done, cousin?"

It was obviously working. Ye Zhong's sympathy told him his talentless little cousin was a weakling stuck in the bottom of the well and wanted a peek at the world above. Naturally, he accepted the request with a friendly smile: "Manipulating runes is not hard, little Wei. No matter what hardship life has for you never give up. Especially in things you think you're not as talented in as others. For example, Supreme Chen Feng was not at all talented when he was a teenager!"

"Okay, watch, manipulating runes is simple!" Ye Zhong looked at his little cousin with a thoughtful glance. The will-force on his fingertips formed an magnetic like attraction towards the runes, which allowed him to effortlessly swapped the two runes around and turned them upside down as Ye Wei suggested.

The new pattern flowed and upon completion it formed a slightly different stance.

The Qi within the stance was now noticeably much more fluid since the formation of runes was more efficient.

In seconds, the courtyard was filled with a silver light and the white tiger figure was shining brighter and clearer than ever before. Two roars were heard, each of them loud as thunder, shaking tiles on the roofs near Ye Zhong's quarters.

"Rawr!"

The tiger's eyes were wide open while roaring. It was a glorious scene to behold as it seemed akin to the coronation of the king of the beasts .

This time around, however, Ye Zhong only used less than half the Qi he normally used for White Tiger's Assault, but it was more powerful!

"Eh, what is going on?!" Ye Zhong was completely baffled. When he raised his head in shock, he doubtfully looked at the figure of the white

tiger above him. The power of the stance had undoubtedly improved by approximately one third!

White Tiger's Assault is the strongest stance among the sixteen high level spirit stances that the Ye seniors taught to the younger generation; how was it possible that one minor change improved a stance with such a long history so enormously!

Chapter 18: Perfect Assault

Ye Zhong was still not convinced by his senses and felt the astounding impact of the tiger's strike then look over to Ye Wei with suspicion.

‘Fluke?’

‘One out of one hundred and thirty six, he picked one rune to alter and it just happened to refine the stance? Just how lucky is that?’

The tiger's roar echoed throughout the whole manor, the stronger family members' heightened senses were the first to pick it up. Everyone who heard it turned their heads towards the source and knew it was Ye Zhong from the direction it came from.

‘Little Zhong works well under pressure, way to go! Judging by the tiger roar's magnitude, he is a good thirty percent stronger than when I last saw him fight!’ Ye Zheng Qing was overjoyed.

‘Well done son! With your talent our family might just have a chance!’

Upon hearing the roar and realising it was the sound of Ye Zhong's improvement, young and old in the family were happy and proud. The younger family members will be gathering around Ye Zhong asking for a show from their idol tomorrow morning.

Ye Zhong's hands were still shaking, and he jogged his memory to investigate the drastic difference in power the modification caused. ‘In hindsight, this minor change was actually genius, and it would only work on these two specific runes.

The White Tiger's Assault was passed down for generations and attempts to refine it have been carried out by the Ye's predecessors, but Ye Wei's suggestions seemed to have spotted what they missed and made a more significant impact on the stance in terms of improvement!

“Wei, be honest with me, what was going on? Don't tell me you don't know what happened, or it was a coincident because I will not believe that!” Ye Zhong looked excited and placed his hands on Ye Wei's shoulders, looked him right in the eyes as he said each word clearly with

sincerity.

“I am not completely sure, a teacher at the academy told me I have outstanding soul sensibility and the potential to become a Runemaster.” Ye Wei did not hold back the information and answered calmly; he felt a bit embarrassed having played stupid and gotten caught out.

“Outstanding soul sensitivity and the potential to become a Runemaster?” Ye Zhong was startled and euphoric, his head was buzzing, overwhelmed by this tremendous surprise. ‘Red Sentient Ye Wei could become a Runemaster?!’

He held Ye Wei’s shoulder tight and wanted to make sure he heard right, even though his soul sensibility talent was confirmed by correction to the stance. “Is that true?” He was in seventh heaven, Ye Wei had refined the White Tiger’s Assault so casually.

A potential Runemaster, Runemaster Ye, this is big news!

There were only around thirty Runemaster apprentices based in Green Moon City to three Runemasters, if Ye Wei was to become one with his connections the Ye family can easily befriend powerful individuals for quests and expeditions.

Taking these benefits into consideration, the talentless Ye Wei was actually the greatest treasure of Ye family, a hidden gem, a trump card that can turn things around and put the Ye clan on the map! If Ye Wei completes his training as a Runemaster, he will become as strong as a seven star Condensed Prime Warrior!

Nobody, not even the Big Three would look down on a family that houses a Runemaster!

Ye Zhong could not imagine how the elders of the family would react to Ye Wei’s new found talent, the Ye family has been the underdogs for too long!

“Haha! Little cousin, if anyone say anything bad about you, send them my way and I’ll give them a good beating!” Ye Zhong clenched his fist and declared his endorsement jokingly, the doubt in his mind and frown on his

face vanished.

“Yea, but cousin Zhong, I still need to become a seven star Student before I can perfect and create my own stances with the speed I am at now it could take years, and the family still need you to help out and do work.” Ye Wei tried to bring his talent back to context and he was slightly displeased with the time it may take for him to become a seven star Student and make a difference with his own abilities.

“Do your parents and does gramps know about your talent yet?” Ye Zhong took a couple of deep breath and regained his cool and with a curious look he asked his little cousin.

“I haven’t got myself to do it yet, I was going to tell them when the dust has settled with my future plans about training, and I am sure they have a lot on their minds already with the Du family at our doorstep.” Ye Wei was being as sensitive as always and he knew it would not achieve much telling them.

“You should tell the old guys when you have the opportunity, they might be able to help you with your training and put your talents to good use for the family, however, it is important you don’t let people outside our family know too much!” Ye Zhong knew very well the Du family knowing about little cousin’s soul sensitivity could put his development as a Runemaster, or even his life, in jeopardy!

“Sure!” Ye Wei nodded, he was more concerned about hearing news from Lin Zi Yan regarding his apprenticeship with master Yi, wondering if he would meet the master’s requirement.

Ye Zhong patted his cousin on the shoulder and laughed heartily saying: “Before the news reaches grandpa you won’t get a lot of resources from the family, if you need help on that front your cousin has your back!”

“Thanks so much big cousin!”

“Don’t thank me! That’s what family is for!” Ye Zhong’s mood was greatly elevated having heard Ye Wei’s good news and refining White Tiger’s Assault, the evening took a great turn for him.

“About White Tiger’s Assault, there is still one other node that can be refined, but it is more complicated than the previous change we made, thus I am not completely confident dealing with it, cousin we will have to work together!” Seeking perfection, Ye Wei said sincerely.

“Another correction?!” Ye Zhong was in awe his eyes sparkled like an innocent child. ‘After what was done moments ago, the stance was as strong as a peak high level stance could get and there was still room for improvement? Where are you going with this?’

He was strong, but a four star Warrior has his limits. His Qi and primal energy were not enough to sustain anything more than spirit stances, but if Ye Wei and him can upgrade White Tiger’s Assault to a Myst level stance then cosmic energy will descend and upgrade his Sentient and cultivation by miles!

The act of fighters refining a stance and pushing it into a higher level is what triggers the descent of cosmic energy. It’s almost as if the cosmos listens to fighters body and rewards those who are worthy by giving them a large amount of pure energy that other would take years of training to acquire and accumulate.

Furthermore the stance grading system is just an indication of the power it holds, if the performer upgraded a stances’ power by switching the rune compositions and arrangement they can perform the stances regardless of the star level requirements.

“Time is of the essence!” Ye Zhong will be facing a strong talented foe from the Du family in three days, to refine and perfect this stance he knows is the quickest way to raise his power and combat advantages and with limited time he knew how tight his schedule was.

“What should I do?” Ye Zhong looked forward to further improving the White Tiger’s Assault, he was desperate to hear what Ye Wei had to say and start working on it!

“I am not sure how to fix this node, but I can tell your Qi flow is being slowed down at that place. I would like to observe a few more times before confirming what is causing the problem!” Ye Wei pondered before

he made the statement.

“Okay! Whatever it takes. I trust you!” Ye Zhong smiled and nodded.

The cousins shared a look enjoying the moment of openness and started working on making Zhong’s favorite stance perfect.

With the experience he gained from the Triple Tidal Palm refinement he was more confident than the last time, Ye Wei pointed at the rune that needed correcting and started suggesting.

Chapter 19: Gift From The Heavens

“Get rid of the twenty-third rune, swap the thirty-eighth and fortieth runes with the fifty-seventh and sixty-third one, also they need to be adjusted a little bit. Humm move them up a little more!”

Under Ye Wei’s supervision, Ye Zhong’s fingers started dancing in the air leaving shining trails of runes. Because he was very familiar with White Tiger’s Assault the efficiency he displayed along with his movements made it seem as if he was performing a majestic play. Since childhood Wei and Zhong have been close playmates such that they did not need to use words to communicate, Ye Zhong would know how his little cousin wanted him correct the rune halfway through the hints. They had a bond similar to dancing partners.

“Yep, just like that. Slow down! you don’t want to move it too much!” Ye Wei frowned now and then trying to feel the Qi flow.

There were one hundred and thirty-six complex runes in White Tiger’s Assault compared to Triple Tidal Palm’s thirty-six, finding a balance and an optimal route was therefore not as easy.

The cousins were making adjustments for half of the evening, Ye Zhong got pale from fatigue as Ye Wei got increasingly frustrated as the night progressed without significant progress.

Ye Wei was not only bothered by the lack of progress, his older cousin was only a four star Warrior and he was draining his Qi and will-force rapidly. He didn’t have enough to repeatedly perform a high level stance much longer if he kept going like this.

“Hey cousin Zhong, let’s take a little break? You should rest a little!”

Ye Wei was looking at his cousin, seeing droplets of sweat on his pale face that were vibrating due to his muscle spasms. Refinement was not a task to be taken lightly, even more so when Ye Wei was not correcting them himself but someone else.

“Yea, good call!”

Ye Zhong nodded and gave up being stubborn. His dantian still had some reserves left, but he ran out of will-force. His head got heavier and heavier causing him to lose focus very often during their attempts. With the back of his hand he wiped off the sweat then adjusted his breathing.

Crossing his legs he sat in the middle of the courtyard. With the Ye family's Falling Star form running at full speed he regained will-force and Qi while the late night turned into early morning. The Falling Star form is one of the best formulas in Green Moon City, it only circulated for close to four hours, and Ye Zhong had already regained a big portion of his energy when the sun lit up the clouds while peaking above the horizon. Ye Zhong opened his eyes as the first drop of sun shone on his face, then he stood up and exhaled steadily.

"Let's continue!"

With enthusiasm and a good amount of Qi to spend, Ye Zhong was determined to finish what they started, but his mental fatigue was visible from a slight frown. Ye Wei caught the small gesture on his cousin's face and said, "The sun is coming up, can't we just call it a night? I can just come back tonight instead?" Ye Wei was worried about his cousin's health, as he looked up to the brightening morning sky and suggested.

Performing stances for the whole evening and through the night took a lot of energy and mental focus. The Falling Star form could indeed recover his body, a bit, but it takes time not training to regain freshness of the mind which is crucial to a productive training session.

Although there were still three days left till the fight, Du Han Yue was no ordinary opponent and Ye Zhong needed every second of training he could fit into his schedule to be able to compete against him. The refinement of White Tiger's Assault could be the key to Zhong's victory. Ye Wei had almost fully comprehend the Qi path of the stance and he was more or less sure he could refine it within a day or two. As such, there was no point in big cousin pushing his body to the limit when he could be resting and be in better shape for the next day's training.

"I am fine, I know my limits!"

“Let’s try a few more times before calling it!” Ye Zhong was as stubborn as a bull. Though he was tired a whole night of training got him in the zone and he did not want to stop just yet.

“Well... a few more times it is then.” Ye Wei nodded reluctantly; he disagreed but understood his eagerness.

The next couple attempts showed progress. The Qi flow was much smoother, but the connection between the corrected sections was shaky, so close but yet so far.

Summer mornings in Green Moon City were very pleasant, hot but not scorching. The summer breeze brought the refreshing scent of soil and fresh cut grass. It woke up and refreshed their overworked minds a little.

“Get rid of the twenty-third rune and swap the thirty-eighth and fortieth with the fifty-seventh and the sixty-third!”

“Let’s try placing the hundred and third rune to the left of the twelfth rune as well.”

Ye Wei was nowhere close to being a martial arts expert, but he was very familiar to the structure of White Tiger’s Assault by now. The way it flowed was etched into his memory after seeing it repeatedly throughout the night.

Although their progress wasn’t a lot nor fast, the duo developed great synergy from the failures. Ye Zhong’s fingers reacted to his little cousin’s instructions almost immediately.

Ye Zhong followed the instructions, at this point his body’s movements were pretty much mindless. He finished drawing the hundred and thirty-sixth runes in the stance. The stance seemed to shine brighter upon completion.

A low humming noise erupted out of nowhere from the last rune he drew, its glow gradually intensifying as the tiger took shape. The brightness transformed into a silver spike on the forehead of the beast.

“Blazing Horned Tiger!?” As figure of a powerful spirit beast took shape it shook Ye Zhong. His exhausted mind was woken up by the beast’s cry.

The Horned Tiger stretched its muscular body and let out three roars from the bottom of its lungs. The sound wave slamming onto their ear drums shaking the ground like a small earthquake, the brown soil showed underneath little cracks between patches of green grass.

The terrifying pressure wave caused by the roar went through Ye Wei's body, his inner-ears were being strained to their limits. Hearing and feeling the third roar he lost his balance and adrenaline sped up his heartbeat, but the paleness of his face did not reflect this. His fear could not suppress the joy erupting from the bottom of his heart smiling he thought, 'We did it?'

From what Ye Wei could tell, the runes were now at the most optimal combination. The cold blooded tiger had become so powerful he thought it might have broken into the realm of being a forbidden spirit stance.

While the duo were recovering from both their shock and joy, a massive pillar of light descended from the sky and engulfed Ye Zhong.

The pores on Ye Zhong's skin opened up bathing in the bright white light. His skin turned red and became warmer as the energy rushed through his body, rinsing his meridians and Sentient.

This pillar of light was magnitudes larger than when Triple Tidal Palm was perfected when Lin Zi Yan received her gift.

Lin Zi Yan's Triple Tidal Palm went from a low level stance to a mid level stance. This time around, though, the Ye duo achieved the unimaginable and brought White Tiger's Assault up a whole class. The cosmic energy that descended was several times the quantity of Zi Yan's.

The vast amount of cosmic energy found its way into Ye Zhong and his body was trying to absorb it all, however, the rate of absorption could not keep up with the seemingly endless supply, as bolts of energy bounced off his body and were deflected in Ye Wei's direction.

Ye Wei's body was like a dry sponge. The cosmic energy was immediately soaked up by Ye Wei's thirsty body. It was not a large amount, but for a two star Student this small amount was enough to fill his whole body. The energy worked its way from his skin into his

meridians, then followed the meridians into his Sentient. It came to Ye Wei's attention that the gold in his Sentient was starting to outshine the red...

Chapter 20: Myst Stance

The white pillar of vast cosmic energy bombarded Ye Zhong's Sentient, he was surely the winner in this training session.

“Bang!”

The energy expanded Ye Zhong's Sentient with a small explosion resulting in a breakthrough; he was no longer a four star Warrior!

This was a new experience for Ye Zhong, hearing about how powerful cosmic energy was one thing, but experiencing the intensity first hand was quite another. He broke through to four stars level just recently and according to his training plan he was prepared to spend two more years cultivating before attempting another breakthrough. He did not know how to express his exuberance at achieving the unanticipated.

It was a great experience for Ye Wei as well. The refinement of Zi Yan's Triple Tidal Palm from a low to mid level Spirit stance and her subsequent breakthrough to a Warrior was a great start for any Runemaster.

This time around he upgraded White Tiger's Assault to a new class altogether, from Spirit to Myst, an astounding feat for a second time refiner.

The cosmic energy that descended as a result of the refinement of White Tiger's Assault was immense, if Ye Zhong was more efficient in absorbing it he could have reached the six star level, but a lot of the energy went to waste which was a shame!

“Five star Warrior Ye Zhong with a Myst level stance in his arsenal! What an evening!” Ye Zhong was euphoric. “You gave our family a Myst stance little cousin!”

Ye Zhong clenched his fist, he closed his eyes and felt the fearsome power flowing in his veins and within his muscles.

To become a dominate family, exclusive powerful stances are a must in this power-centric society.

The Ye family is a upper second class family in Green Moon City, as they have sixteen high level Spirit stances but only three Myst stances!

Once in awhile Myst stances would be seen at the auction houses sold at ridiculously unaffordable prices by Runemasters. Ye Wei just gave the family a peerless gift that will become a family asset and foundation for a stronger Ye family in the future!

The bad new was, other Warriors in the Ye family would not be able to perform the stance until they reach Condensed Prime level, as the Blazing Horned Tiger's Assault is in the end, a Myst level stance...

"Little Wei!" Ye Zhong looked at his cousin emotionally, grabbing ahold of his shoulders tightly and exclaimed. "You are gifted! A gift for the family!" Grateful was an understatement.

"I just happen to be lucky with this kind of stuff!" Ye Wei did not forget to be modest, as he showed a small smile on his face and spoke to his cousin. He was overjoyed with Ye Zhong's breakthrough and mastering of a Myst stance before the big fight.

"Hahaha! Whatever you say! However you did it, you made me a five star Warrior and gave our family a Myst stance today!" Ye Zhong could not thank his little cousin properly, he was still amused by what just occurred.

Once upon a time, despite being supportive and loving even Ye Zhong had to agree with the family's opinion when it came to how untalented Ye Wei was. He had been rooting for his little cousin since he was a kid, and today it was an amazing surprise how help came from where he least expected.

"I am pretty worn out, cousin Zhong can I head home and sleep now?" Ye Wei yawned as the words came out of his mouth. Relieved from the pressure of constantly refining White Tiger's Assault, he was completely relaxed now and extra susceptible to the tiredness that had building up since the family dinner; how can he not be falling asleep? Ye Wei gave his big cousin a farewell hug before clumsily dragging his exhausted back to his room.

The sun has risen by now and the turquoise morning sky was decorated with a few scarcely visible stars. The Ye manor was covered in a screen of fog, like a bride's face covered by her veil.

The summer breeze was mixed with the scent of blooming flowers, keeping Ye Wei fast asleep. Meanwhile the master of the house was walking quickly, impatiently heading towards Ye Zhong's quarters. He was mumbling, looking a bit mean, it was apparent he prepared his mindset to train and instruct.

"It's not only Du Han Yue we should be worried about, there are also a few five star Warriors little Zhong might have to put on the ground before facing Han Yue. And that as well won't be easy..."

"From the deep and powerful tiger cries I could hear last night, Zhong has gotten better at using White Tiger's Assault! That is a silver lining!" Grandpa was proud and smiling when he knocked on Ye Zhong's door able to see the positive side of the current events.

"Who is it?" Ye Zhong was already awake and fresh, motivated by last night's progress he was training in the courtyard since he woke up.

"Gramps!" He stated as grandpa entered.

Ye Zheng Qing was positive, but Ye Zhong could still see he was worried and tired from the way his white eyebrows were arching. 'Did gramps look this old at the banquet?' He thought.

"Zhong, I heard your tiger's roar last night. Do you have some good news?" Grandpa was eager to confirm his hypothesis.

"Yea Grandpa! I made amazing progress last night!" Ye Zhong wanted to tell grandpa everything, about his breakthrough, how Ye Wei showed his talent and refined Ye family's White Tiger's Assault into a Myst stance, but he wanted Ye Wei to tell grandpa the news himself so he held his tongue in the end.

"The White Tiger's Assault is your best stance. I am sure you are on top of it. What we are going to be focusing on today is your battle experience and combat wisdom!" Ye Zheng Qing said solemnly. "You are the

strongest Ye in the younger generation. I am not saying the others are weak, but you are the one with the most potential to become a Condensed Prime Warrior while the others' chances are slimmer. You will become the leader of this family when the time comes, and I want to make sure you become stronger before my time is up."

Hearing what grandpa had in mind, Ye Zhong felt the weight of the responsibility and got a bit teary as well. "Grandpa you are as healthy as a horse! You can worry about that in fifty years!" Ye Zhong clenched his fist. He could not stop smiling because he knew deep in his heart that Ye Wei could become something too and the family will not be only his responsibility when the day comes!

They started training in a good spirit, grandpa was passing on deep combat knowledge, the mind games and important subtle footwork and battle stances one could only learn from having their life on the line in a fight. During the training Ye Zhong held back and did not reveal that he was already a five star Warrior and also used White Tiger's Assault when he had to use it, instead of Blazing Horned Tiger's Assault .

During the day Ye Zhong trained with grandpa and at night he was refining stances with Ye Wei, during these three nights they refined three stances in total: The new Myst stance, Blazing Horned Tiger's Assault. High level Spirit stances, Spindrift Steps and Triple Plunder Sword.

The two other stances together with White Tiger's Assault were three of Ye Zhong's favorite stances. Although they were not that strong, but used in specific situations during combat they become very useful, even more so now that they are refined and unknown by the enemy he was about to face due to the refinements.

Chapter 21: Bothersome

The dantian of a five star Warrior can't normally support a Myst stance. Unless the Warrior upgraded the stance from Spirit to Myst through refinement. As such with the aid of cosmic energy, performing the Blazing Horned Tiger's Assault was made possible for Ye Zhong.

The other two stances him and Ye Wei worked on produced decent results as well.

Spindrift Steps was considered a simple high level Spirit stance, after the second night of refinement, it was now a peak high level stance.

Also a simple high level Spirit stance, Triple Plunder Sword had more potential out of the two stances. On the third night it reached forbidden high level after three corrections.

Forbidden was not just a name, while performing forbidden stances the user's Qi is essentially compressed and causes great stress to one's meridians and Sentient as the compressed energy passes through the body. Practicing these techniques were eventually tabooed as the lives they claimed accumulated over the years.

Ye Wei was quite aware of the wild Qi flow with Triple Plunder Sword, therefore he swapped in runes that slowed the Qi flow down during the refinement process. The stance was now more Qi demanding, but less damaging to the user's body! Though, even with that in mind, Ye Zhong would not use it unless the timing was perfect, as the pressure Triple Plunder Sword gave to his body is not something he needs while fighting a stronger opponent where avoiding taking hits is crucial.

Ye Wei was the only person in the household who knew Ye Zhong broke through and became a five star Warrior, also all the refinements were kept secret between the two of them for multiple reasons.

Although Ye Zhong's strength was still outmatched by the six star Du Han Yue, the odds of Ye Zhong coming out on top increased a lot due to the element of surprise and the intensive well rounded training!

It was now the eve before the big fight and the challengers from the Du family would be at the manor's gates by dawn. The two cousins were sitting above the yard on the branch of a century old antique willow sharing their hardships under the mellow moonlight.

They talked about everything, Ye Wei even shared his unpleasant and complicated relationship with Joe Yin.

"That is crazy! Just who does she think she is? Those exact words actually came out of Joe Yin's mouth?" The insults and Joe Yin's behavior were deemed outrageous by Ye Zhong, and his face twisted in anger while cracking his knuckles as he spoke.

"We can't blame it all on her, she is strong enough to get herself a bed at Green Phoenix, it's okay to have some pride. On the other hand though, she was right I should be stronger considering how long I have been training at South Star Academy!" Ye Wei sounded modest but in his mind he was eager to prove everyone wrong.

"Little Wei, never underestimate yourself! One day you will be the dragon and her the snake, and then she will wish she had never said that to a Runemaster!" Ye Zhong patted his little cousin's shoulder, although he was not a South Star Academy student he could imagine how much mockery and bullying from schoolmates Ye Wei had to endure over the years after hearing Ye Wei open up and talking about what had been bothering him.

Ye Zhong witnessed Ye Wei and Joe Yin growing up, he knew how close they were, therefore understood the pain and suffering Ye Wei had to go through. Getting betrayed and insulted by a childhood friend is more agonising than an outsider could ever imagined. Trying not to be affected by emotions before the big fight, he took a deep breath and suppressed his anger.

In the past, Ye Zhong asked his little cousin how school was going, but the conversations never lasted longer than two sentences. Tonight was the first time Ye Wei felt comfortable enough to open up about his experiences at school and let others see the scars on his heart.

After unloading the burden he had been carrying around for the first time, Ye Wei felt content and relieved. He was pleased to have a caring cousin listen to him.

“Oh well... Guess I just have to get used to it! With Joe Yin though, I’ve always treated her like she was my little sister, I never thought she would turn her back on me. Even if she won’t respect me, I will! I do not need disloyal friends around me!” Ye Wei was leaning on the thick tree trunk, looking up at the silver moon enjoying the heartwarming moment with an honest smile on his face.

‘Having real family caring about me is good enough, Joe Yin can live her own life the way she wants to, I won’t let that bother me.’

Thinking about all the people who really care for him, Ye Wei couldn’t help himself and was thinking about Lin Zi Yan. Her figure appeared in his mind out the blue. ‘Apart from my family, Zi Yan might be the only person who really cares about me..’

“From what you’ve said about her that substitute teacher Lin Zi Yan seems to be a nice person. She must be a genius then as she is in the special class. How old is she? Ye Zhong wanted to lighten the mood, guessing there might be something romantic going on between her and Ye Wei, so he cheekily changed the topic.

“Lin Zi Yin? I think she is fifteen, maybe?” Ye Wei pretended he wasn’t sure.

Ye Wei could hear from cousin Zhong’s tone of voice that there were subtexts to him changing the topic. He started blushing and shook his head a little.

“Oh just two years older than you? That’s not bad. You two should have loads to talk about!” Ye Zhong grinned as he spoke.

“Cousin Zhong, this is not funny when she gave me the bottle of Fiery Sun Quencher pills she did not look like she was going to miss them. It is obvious her family is extremely rich, even if I like her I am not good enough for her...” Ye Wei shrugged, although he likes Zi Yan, he would not consider anything other than being a friend to her before becoming a

Runemaster.

“That is nonsense, no girl on this planet is too good for you! Lin Zi Yan... I cannot recall any Lin family in Green Moon City, is she from around here?” Ye Zhong was curious about her background, but he could not recall anything remotely related to a Lin family.

“Hey Cousin Zhong, it is getting late and you haven’t been resting properly at all and this is the third day in a row now; what do you say about having a good night’s worth of sleep? Fighting for the family is going to be stressful!” Ye Wei looked at the darkening night sky, and told Ye Zhong who appeared to be in a deep thought.

The result of tomorrow’s fight will have a great impact on our family in every aspect!

Ye Zhong was reminded that it was not only his fight and he has a great burden of responsibility on his shoulders. ‘Yea! I will win and defend my family till my very last breath if that is the case!’

The family’s land, reputation, and future is in his hands. There was no other way than to win.

“I will head back too!” Ye Wei nodded nervous but spirited. He leaped down from the branch and walked towards his room.

“Okay!” Ye Zhong looked at the round moon, and thought about how it symbolizes family unity. He clenched his fists and swore to himself: ‘My body and my strength belong to this family.’

Being a strong young Ye had never meant as much as it did today to him. He was ready to take on the greatest obstacle he had ever seen in the seventeen years he’s been alive.

Chapter 22: Seven Star Condensed Prime

The evening passed in silence like the calm before the storm.

At the break of dawn, there were only birds and a couple of Ye family elders at the Ye family arena.

As the sun rose higher into the sky a crowd was starting to gather. The Ye family was well established in their corner of Green Moon City, but they were not the reason there was a growing crowd. The Du family had their fingers in different industries and produced countless quality fighters for around a century now and citizens were eager to see fighters from one of the Big Three families display their strength.

It was not news that Ye family's businesses had not be doing well, rumours had already been flying around for months now. The family's enemies that gathered at the arena couldn't sit at home and wait for the results, they wanted to witness it as it unfolds. On the other side a few worried families were present rooting for the Ye family and praying for a miracle.

Although it had only been three days since the decision to fight against the Du family, news travel fast in this city and the authorities were here as well to keep things in order due to the amount of rivals gathered in one place.

The audience was talking amongst themselves, their small gossip and chatter was getting louder as more and more members of the audience started to converse about their predictions and opinions.

"I don't think the Ye family can possibly win this fight! The Du family looks prepared. I even heard that they're after Ye's ancestral land by North Hill Bay!"

"What? That is where their family graves are! If they lose that plot of land how would they stay influential here in Green Moon City? They would lose all face!"

"Yeah well the Ye family's legacy is coming to an end, they only have

two Condensed Prime Warriors, one of whom is a three star level and the other one is only a one star. The Du family is still relatively young but how often do you see a century old family with six Condensed Prime Warriors? Plus the strongest of them, their master Du Yuan Ming is a seven star Condensed Prime Warrior!”

“The Ye family’s younger generation can’t hold a candle to the Du family’s; I like the friendly Ye family, but, sadly, I really don’t see them winning or even having a chance!”

The audience all looked to the side of the arena as the Ye family arrived, a majestic aura lingered around Ye Zheng Qing as he looked over the crowd then sat down in front of the arena, wanting to be close to the action.

Ye Wei was way too weak to be participating today, he could only stand in the crowd and watch his uncles and aunt standing behind Ye Zheng Qing, Ye Zhong, Ye Xuan, Ye Qiu and other youngsters who will be fighting. The whole Ye family was tensed, worried about the family’s future. The contestants from the Ye family were all looking extra nervous, being the best youngsters in the Ye family had never given them this much pressure.

Ye Wei had his head down and his fists were clenched. ‘Cousin Zhong don’t be scared by the pressure,’ Ye Wei was young, but growing up in a big family taught him that reputation was everything. If the Ye family were to fall now and scatter across the lands, it would be the end of what the family had achieved so far and they would not get any help rebuilding what they had. Other families will always put their own gains in front of everything else! Humiliation today will hurt every member of the family.

The tension in the air was palpable.

“The master of the Du family Du Yuan Ming is here, together with Ling He Merchant Guild’s president Dong Ho and general Zhou Wu!” The announcer yelled. The tension at the arena intensified.

The gossiping crowd fell silent and turned their eyes towards the entrance of the arena, awaiting the Du family camp’s arrival impatiently.

“Let them in!” Ye Zheng Qing yelled in cold rage, the veins on his arms were popping out. He mumbled to himself: “The Du family made an effort to invite those two? I guess the rumours about general Zhou and president Dong being bought was the truth after all!”

The intentions of the Du family were clear, the general and Ling He Merchant Guild’s president were here to pressure the Ye family. They wanted to seal the deal as soon as possible when they defeated the Ye according to their plan!

The arena gates suddenly opened, letting in a great amount of uniformed men. Who laid out a long red carpet at the entrance. An intimidating blood-soaked silver sword crest was embroidered into each and every one of their uniforms. They have finally arrived.

Judging by spirit, the Du family already had an advantage.

The carpet split the crowd, and Du Yuan Ming came walking in. He entered with a swagger, chatting with the crowd on both sides as if socialising is what he came here for.

Behind him to his right was a well built middle aged man in a black battle robe. His face told a bloody tale, underneath his broad forehead was a long and hideous scar across his evil looking face. General Zhou of Green Moon City was an experienced Warrior, a Seven Star Condensed Prime Warrior.

Rumour has it that general Zhou’s face turned emotionless ever since the Shen dynasty decided to purge the rebel force. General Zhou was commander of the army, killing rebels hiding among civilians as well as suspicious innocents... This was the start of his cruel reputation.

On Du Yuan Ming’s left was a slightly chubby man in an exquisite silk robe. He had the carefree smile of a rich man on his face and the attitude to go with it. President Dong Ho of Ling He Merchant Guild, a five star Condensed Prime Warrior.

Behind the three men leading the way were more than ten chatty teenagers, all of them with a smirk on their faces while boasting and trashing the Ye family. They were the challengers from the Du family and

some of the strongest teenagers in Green Moon City. Within the group was one of the top five strongest teens in the city: the six star Warrior Du Han Yue!

The Ye family stared at the Du family with hatred while they entered the arena. Their businesses were at the worst point they had ever been at with the last two months being especially rough.

Being poor was okay, but to live without dignity was not. As such right now protecting the family's ancestral graves was all that was on the Ye family's mind.

"Yuan Ming, do you see their faces? Apparently the Ye family hates you by the looks of it!" The chubby Dong He was amused by their aggressive postures.

"If you're not hated, then you're doing it wrong!" The master of Du family shared some life philosophy with him, "Business is war in a sense, if you lose you can't blame anyone but yourself!"

"Ha, I guess you are right to an extent. But it's not exactly fair for the Ye family now that you have Lu Feng in the boat on top of the connection your family has. Taking over their mystic scroll and arms business was a certainty from the start right?" Dong Ho had been business partners with the Du family for a while now, he more or less knew their tactics inside out.

Master Yi, Master Mu, and Master Ning were the only three Runemasters in Green Moon City. Rumour has it that Lu Feng was Master Mu's love child.

He was master Mu's first apprentice and the main reason the Ye family's scroll and arms sales were in the dumps. He was the supplier of the Du family for this business attack.

"It's in both our family's and Lu Feng's interest, he did his part in securing our supplies and now we just need to get what he wants from the Ye's to finish the deal!" Du Yuan Ming had an evil smile on his face. Lu Feng promised to sign a thirty year supply contract if the Du family would give him the Ye family's ancestral land next to North Hill Bay!

“The Ye family doesn’t have a say in this; we will deliver when our youngsters destroy their kids today!” General Zhou’s deep voice had great presence. He was appointed by Lu Feng to make sure Ye Zheng Qing handed over the deed once the fight was won.

“Mister Ye, it’s been three months now. You look a lot older than when we last met! You have to take care of your body, if you pass away these young ones may end up on the streets! Hahahaha!” Du Yuan Ming stared at Ye Zheng Qing and shouted, the volume of his laugh was as immense as thunder. His statement rang out and was heard clearly by every single member of the audience.

The staggering power of a seven star Condensed Prime Warrior, he broke through...

The impulse knocked everyone in the arena back a few steps, as most of the audience were ordinary Students who seldom got the chance to meet even their own family master. This was their first time witnessing a person this highly ranked. There were only around ten people who had reached this level!

Ye Zheng Qing stood in front of the Ye family, using his Qi as a shield to protect himself and the family members behind him: “Just worry about your own problems, my aged body is in good shape it’s got at least fifty more years to go! Though I have seen stronger men than you through the years I have lived mister Du, and sadly, most of them are not alive now for some reason!”

Ye Zheng Qing’s voice did not pack as much power, but it had a penetrating quality dissolving the pressure from Du Yuan Ming’s sonic waves.

Although grandpa did all he could to shield his clan, Ye Wei who was standing away in the corner still felt the pressure, and he was too weak... His Sentient felt like it was about to be crushed under the pressure.

“No! I can’t faint here everyone else is on their feet. I can’t let Du Yuan Ming put me to my knees just by his voice!” Mental strength was the only thing keeping Ye Wei standing up, his forehead was dripping with sweat

and his body was cramping.

The seven star Condensed Prime Warrior's crushing power not only pressured Ye Wei's body, his Sentient was suffering as well, the stinging sensation was agonising.

'I will not give in!' Years of being the weakest in his family had given Ye Wei an impressive iron will. That scream, that willpower came from the bottom of his heart and flipped a switch in his Sentient.

All of a sudden a golden spark was shining bright in his Sentient and created a tiny explosion, fighting back Du Yuan Ming's power!

"Bang!"

The pain made Ye Wei's face pale, but he felt stronger somehow his Sentient was expanding!

Ye Wei's Sentient took over his body, filling it with Qi and strengthening his bones and muscles; It made him a three star Student!

Ye Wei was bare conscious, but he did notice that he broke through. 'What just happened?' He was surprised and confused. For any other Student, cultivating would become harder once they hit seven stars having to master mystic runes. But with Ye Wei, it was the opposite for him and he knew it. When he gets to seven star level he can start using stances and gain cosmic energy from creating and refining stances due to his superior runic knowledge. Not only would he not slow down, his cultivation would speed up immensely.

'Not long now, only four more to go then I can truly make a difference!'

Chapter 23: Runicle

The psychological warfare started long before the official fight. Tension was high and weapons were already drawn.

Du Yuan Ming did not expect Ye Zheng Qing to talk back and his face went black. 'Let's see if your c*ckiness will help you hold your little plot of land, old fart!'

The servants of the Du family put a table down in the arena and three chairs around it for the patriarch, the general and the Merchant Guild president, comfort was their priority over respecting the host.

"Ye Zheng Qing, now that we have general Zhou and president Dong as witnesses, I am going to ask you one last time. Will you sell us the land by North Hill Bay?" Backed up by two powerful men, Du Yuan Ming sounded confident as he was staring at Ye Zheng Qing like a hawk at its prey. "You can still change your mind, and the Du family will forgivingly accept the troubles you made us go through and buy your ancestral land for one hundred and twenty thousand silver!"

"If you decide to be stubborn about this you will not be getting anything after the fight!"

"Wait, I will give you lot a hundred silver so you don't end up on the streets right away, I am fair like that!" Du Yuan Ming was desperate to have the last word.

Ye Wei was furious and felt helpless, it was becoming apparent the Du family wanted to crush them and take everything they own.

"If you lose the fight the Du family will take their fingers out of the scroll, arms, restaurant, ranch, and fabric businesses. I hope you will keep your promise!" Ye Zheng Qing knew that if they lost the morale then there would be no hope, keeping his feet on the ground and countered.

"Please!" Du Yuan Ming looked scornfully at the youngsters within the Ye family camp, he laughed and said: "Win with what? But yeah sure, I am a man of my word! Plus we have general Zhou and president Dong

here as witnesses. You just have to win for us to keep our promise!” He was relaxed and confident, and didn’t really care about the details.

“Words are just words, put it on paper!” Ye Zheng Qing took out the contract he prepared, stamping his right index finger quickly on the contract. The inscribed contract flew out and stopped in front of Du Yuan Ming.

Ye Family’s trademark telekinesis skill!

“I like your attention to details, I guess I could use some security too!” Du Yuan Ming cleared his throat. He quickly scanned through the contract and then put his handprint on it without hesitation: “Ha, remember this is a deathmatch!”

Ye Zheng Qing looked at his grandchildren. He was not ready to lose any of them... Ye Zhong caught his grandpa’s worrying look, and signaled to grandpa that things will be fine with a solemn gaze.

Ye Zheng Qing stamped his cold hand on the contract, there was no way out now.

“Rules are as follows: three youngsters from each side, fighting one on one with one fight at a time, the family with the last standing contestant is the victor! Any questions?” General Zhou had a blood thirsty look as he turned and announced the rules to make sure everyone heard them clearly.

“No objections!” Ye Zheng Qing’s deep voice has sounded more confident at other occasions.

“No objections!” Du Yuan Ming on the other side sounded a lot more spirited. ‘They have absolutely no way to win... This fight is just a formality, we are taking from the Ye family no matter what!’

He stared at the Ye camp with an arrogant smile as he sent their first contestant into the arena: “Yin Hong, you’re up!” Du Han Yue was at the six star level; Du An Yi, Cheng Zhi, and Yun Fan were five star. But the strongest Ye youngster was Ye Zhong at only four stars as far as Du Yuan Ming knew, as such there was no point for the Du family to send anyone

stronger than four star, revealing their power.

“Yes!” Du Yin Hong entered the arena confidently and the smile he had told everyone he carried no respect for whoever the Ye family was going to send. In his mind he had no reason to, his cultivation should allow him to better whomever he faced.

Du Han Yue was standing next to the Du Patriarch indifferently looking at the general direction of where the arena was. He was dressed in white today and didn't think he was going to fight.

It was not tactically great to send Ye Zhong out right away because the less energy he has, the less chance he had to win against Du Han Yue. However, nobody else in the Ye camp could match Du Yin Hung's four star cultivation.

Ye Zheng Qing felt dejected, slowly accepting the cruel reality that the Ye family was facing, wondering if he had done something different in the past would the family still be bullied like this? Would his kids be stronger?

“Whiz~”

Ye Zheng Qing's thoughts got interrupted by the noise of a grand looking carriage approaching the arena. It left a trail of dust behind it and the glimmering runes around the carriage became more visible as it got closer.

“Is that a runicle?”

Ye Zheng Qing was startled ‘Do they have even more back up? This time arriving by a runicle too!?’ In the other camp Du Yuan Ming, Zhou Mu, and Dong Ho looked surprised as well.

The crowd started speculating.

“Could it be the City Lord? Or is it someone from the Runemaster Union?”

Only a handful of powerful people traveled by runicle; another person known to own a runicle was South Star Academy's principal.

The runicle stopped by the side of the arena and everyone admired the exquisitely built machine while its blue jade body was reflecting the morning sun. A familiar figure walked out of the runicle gracefully in front of the loud and shocked crowd.

“Zi Yan!” Ye Wei shouted soon as he recognized who the graceful figure belonged to. He was gobsmacked.

The crowd went quiet as Zi Yan walked towards the arena, every pair of eyes were waiting to see what this mysterious teenage girl’s next move was going to be.

Her green dress flowed like a willow in the summer breeze, her crystal clear eyes were set on the pale kid who was standing close to the Ye camp. Her flowing hair covered parts of her face, but it none the less caught everyone’s attention. She still looked a bit childlike but she somehow had the beauty of a woman.

“Who is this beauty?” All the young men were looking at her and temporarily forgot they were here to watch a fight.

‘How do I not know who this is?!’ Du Han Yue was crazed by the hormones in his system, he couldn’t take his eyes off Lin Zi Yan as she was about to walk past him.

‘The pretty face and the elegance, this kind of classiness is what I want in a girl!’

Du Han Yue was agitated, he adjusted his shirt and cleared his throat before he walked up to Zi Yan.

With a warm and friend smile on his face, he introduced himself to the girl of his dreams: “Pleased to meet you, I am Du Han Yue from the Du family, one of Green Moon City’s Big Three.”

Lin Zi Yan registered his words but decided to ignore him. She looked at Du Han Yue for a second then faced forward again continuing on her course.

Chapter 24: For Whom?

Du Han Yue's hand was left hanging, his smile becoming stiff. He could not believe what just happened. When he returned to reality, he embarrassingly pulled his hand back to his body. His face was bright red as if it's just been slapped.

A hostile look replaced his fake smile as Du Han Yue stared at Zi Yan's back. If she didn't walk out of a runicle, he would probably have walked up to her and slapped her.

The strongest teenager in the Du family usually didn't get ignored in any circumstances unless he was asked to be left alone!

'Who is this young girl? And what's with the runicle? She is definitely not an ordinary girl...' Grandpa Ye Zheng Qing was wondering what business this mysterious girl had here at the arena on the morning of this big fight.

Ye Wei was the only one in the family who knew Zi Yan and even he did not know her intention. Let alone the rest of the family. They were getting increasingly confused and anxious as Zi Yan got closer, especially Ye Zheng Qing, he did not want the situation to get worse than it already is.

"Good morning Patriarch Ye!" Lin Zi Yan politely greeted Ye Zheng Qing with a bow. From how well she presented herself Ye Zheng Qing could tell that this was no ordinary girl. She started searching for someone in the crowd as her sweet voice like an angel's faded into the crowd's noise.

Lin Zi Yan looked excited like she had some news to share.

"Hey little girl, are you looking for someone?" Ye Zheng Qing was pretty sure she meant no harm by now, but still, he would like to know what she was after as by the looks of it she was looking for someone from the Ye family... This small disruption actually got his mind off the stress he was under.

'Does anyone know this girl here?'

"I am looking for Ye Wei." She answered. There were too many people

standing in front of Ye Wei, and despite her greatest efforts she could not see him.

“For whom?”

The Ye family camp was speechless. It was obvious this mysterious little girl had some powerful connections, and she’s looking for Ye Wei?

It would make more sense if she was here for Ye Zhong as he does have some admirers and she could be here to support him knowing how important this fight was. No, not even Ye Zhong was in this girl’s league.

Here for Ye Wei!?

For what the family knew, Ye Wei was still a underachieving one star Student with no talent. Probably his red Sentient was the reason for him being at the one star level for three years despite South Star Academy’s reputation. And now a girl like this was somehow connected to Ye Wei? None of it made any sense to them.

“M... Zi Yan, why are you here?” Ye Wei was still not use to not calling her miss, he slowly walked out of the crowd and answered.

‘Zi Yan? So this is the substitute teacher little Wei was talking about so much? That Zi Yan?’ Ye Zhong was surprised, he knew who she was now, but seeing her in person was another thing altogether. He never imagined her to be this young, graceful, and elegant. On top of her looks, her good manners indicated she was brought up by a great family.

‘No wonder why little Wei seemed to be getting over Joe Yin’s betrayal so well. Having a great person who cares about you certainly helps, and Joe Yin does not even look half as good!’ Ye Zhong was glad his little cousin had someone like that on his side and wondered what she was doing here.

Wei’s dad Ye Yi and gramps were the most shocked out of the lot. ‘What’s between those two?’ They stared at Ye Wei waiting for them to speak.

“Ye, I thought were going to fight? Can people who have no business here just get out of the way!” Du Han Yue was extremely displeased that

he got ignored, he shouted out of anger.

Zi Yan answered him with a frown on her face, sighing she gave Du Han Yue a cold look. “Hasn’t anyone taught you how to behave in public? Interrupting is considered rude.”

‘Rude? You have to be joking right? You’re here for you petty little crush while making a fool of yourself, and you’re calling me rude?’ Du Han Yue was about to give Zi Yan a lecture on how to behave in public.

The Du Patriarch spotted something and that something gave him chill. Du Yuan Ming was trying to find clues that would tell him who this little girl was and as his eyes were darting around that’s when he noticed something on Zi Yan’s dress. There was a tiny tulip embroidering, though it was only thumb sized. Being a seven star Condensed Prime Warrior gave him extraordinary vision and while everyone else was admiring Zi Yan’s beauty, Du Yue Ming saw what they couldn’t see.

‘A tulip... It can’t be them, right?’ Du Yue Ming did not want to take any risks and he placed his hand on Han Yue’s shoulder signaling him to hold his tongue. There is time and place to speak up but this was not one of them.

‘They can wipe us out without even revealing themselves Han Yue, just let it go... No, actually, they can take Green Moon City from the shadows if they really wanted to; we can’t afford to make them our enemy they are too dangerous.’

Du Han Yue was puzzled about why his dad would care so much about this little girl. But he was an obedient son, he got the signal so he stopped. ‘Yea, maybe I should just focus on the fight.’

Out of the the corner of his eyes, Ye Zheng Qing caught the Du Patriarch holding his son back. He looked at Zi Yan again curiously.

“Wei, let’s go!” Zi Yan broke the silence as everyone else was talking and guessing what the relationship between Zi Yan and Ye Wei was. “Master Yi is waiting for us!” She didn’t say it loud, but the Ye family could hear every word. As for everyone further away, they could only see her smile and her cherry lips moving.

“Now? But...” Ye Wei looked towards the arena and frowned the fight was about to start and he wanted to stay and support his family. Du Xian Hung was impatiently waiting.

He knew his presence would not mean much, but he wanted to be there to support his family mentally in critical moments like this, an extra friendly face around the arena might make a difference.

It was hard to leave his family behind, especially leaving Ye Zhong behind because they had developed a very tight bond over the past few days.

Ye Wei froze for a few moments. I’ve helped cousin Zhong refine three stances but Du Han Yue is a six star Warrior... I want to be here and see my cousin fight and tell him to get himself out of the arena if it gets bloody.’

“Hey, it’s a very rare window of opportunity. I have no idea when Master Yi will have time for you again after this morning so please come with me!” Lin Zi Yan didn’t know the story behind this fight, and how it would affect the integrity of Ye family, she thought it was just a friendly sparring match.

“But...” Ye Wei was still hesitant. Although Ye Zhong had the element of surprise on his side with the Blazing Horned Tiger’s Assault, he could still lose and in the worst case could lose his life. Ye Wei knew because he would do the same: give his last breath defending the family’s name. And he want’s to be there to drag Ye Zhong out of this exact situation if it shall happen. ‘I don’t want to go...’

“Did I hear right? Master Yi wants to see Ye Wei? What is going on?” The Ye family was discussing between themselves.

Everyone knew the most influential person in Green Moon City was not the City Lord, in fact it wasn’t anyone who lived in the castle. It was Master Yi.

With his infamous weird temper and busy schedule he remained pretty mysterious outside his close circle. Even the Big Three and the city’s officials do not really know much about him.

Ye Zhong walked up to Ye Wei, patted his shoulder and said quietly: “Wei, this is your chance and our chance, you can not let this one slip! If Master Yi likes you you might be able to get him to come here and solve this mess for you!”

“Cousin Zhong...” Ye Wei wanted to say a lot of things, mainly his worries.

“Stop being a little girl and go!” Ye Zhong interrupted him and gave him a push towards Zi Yan.

Ye Wei grinded his teeth: “Zi Yan, I’ll go with you!!” He saw the bigger picture in the end.

Zi Yan was confused by Ye Wei’s indecisiveness, it is great honor for anyone, but Ye Wei seemed hesitant to meet Master Yi.

“Go son don’t make him wait!” Ye Yi also patted Ye Wei’s shoulder. He could feel the cousin duo was hiding something. They had been hanging out a lot lately and now Ye Zhong seemed to be the only person in the arena who had any idea about what was going on.

It seemed a little suspicious, but it was a possible way out of the Ye family’s sticky situation, therefore nobody tried to stop him from leaving.

“I will be back as soon as possible!” Ye Wei took a deep breath and decided to take the opportunity. ‘If I can befriend Master Yi and get him to come save us...’

“Zi Yan, I am ready!” They headed to the runicle side by side.

Not long after they entered the runicle shone bright, primal energy lifted the runicle into the air as the runes lit up. Turbulence picked up some sand and stones as the blue and green runicle flew a hundred meters away in the matter of seconds.

Chapter 25: Ye Wei's Talent

Ye Zheng Qing was left puzzled as the runicle flew away, and it was at this moment that he realised how little he knew about what his grandson was doing these days.

“Zhong, you know something about this little girl and what she has to do with little Wei?” Asked Ye Hai with a deep frown, Ye Zhong is usually not the kind of kid who hides information from his family.

Grandpa looked at him demandingly, the family longed for an explanation to their relationship.

“Actually little Wei has phenomenal soul sensitivity. His talent was discovered by one of his substitute teachers recently, and because of this his substitute teacher is going to introduce him to Master Yi to possibly become an apprentice Runemaster!” Under the intense social pressure, Ye Zhong felt a bit guilty for not being transparent and open as such he could no longer hide it. There was no point hiding it now either everyone knew Ye Wei was heading to Master Yi's place. He missed his chance to tell the good news to the elders himself.

Ye Yi had always been a caring father and tried to be there for his son, so this news surprised him greatly and also shamed him a little. He felt like he did not know anything about his son!

Ye Yi was not the only person who looked surprised, the rest of the family was staring at Ye Zhong, speechless and struggling to believe what they just heard.

‘Every child in the Ye family deserves the same opportunities.’ This had always been Ye Zheng Qing's motto; he always tried to be fair with attention and resource distribution no matter how limited they were. But there were too many children in the Ye family, and he had to compromise his values for the families new policies to protect their future first. So he end up focusing more time and resources on the kids who showed more talent.

Ye Wei grew up in the shadows of everyone else, outside of the attention

of the family. The family expected nothing from him and his red Sentient, so Ye Wei got used to their uncaring attitudes. The family couldn't imagine he grew so much and became the child who surpassed the expectations placed on them the most out of all of kids of the Yu family.

"A Runemaster with his Sentient?" Ye Wei wasn't even expected to become a Warrior. "Nevermind the details, we could have a Runemaster in the family soon!" Ye Zheng Qing's voice trembled, he could not describe in words how excited he was.

Ye Hai too was slightly ashamed: "I scolded him pretty hard the other night for not training hard enough..." Why didn't he just tell me he has been doing his best and actually achieved something incredible?

"Dad, it's okay he's a boy, but a mature one. Little Wei understands you just want what's best for him!" Ye Zhong smiled, he was proud of who Ye Wei was becoming.

Ye Yi started to tear up, Joe Wan and him had gotten a few white hairs over the years worrying about Ye Wei's talent. All the worry and bitterness just turned into hope and good wishes, they were relieved to hear that their son had a bright future ahead of him.

Ye Zheng Qing calmed down a little. Having a Runemaster in the family would help solve many problems the family was facing, not only can Ye Wei become the next patriarch, he could also be the key to the Ye family reaching new heights! He looked across at the Du camp with a clenched fist determined to protect his family and hold things together. Buying time for Ye Wei now was the most important task, everything would be fine once he was with Master Yi!

Du Yuan Ming stared at the the spirited Ye camp and he heard Master Yi's name mentioned.

'Ye Zheng Qing had already stamped the contract, when we crush them in this fight there will be no turning back, there is nothing Master Yi can do!'

"Master Yi was known for his weird temper and being a hermit who doesn't interfere with personal disputes. He will not interrupt a mere

fight, who cares about the Ye family anyway?”

He thought it was naive for the Ye family to put their faith in Master Yi, and their misplaced faith will be meaningless against Lu Feng’s plans to get ahold of their ancestral land.

“Brother Ye, the contestant from the Du family is already standing in the middle of the arena, how long will you keep us waiting? Are you scared?” Du Yuan Ming taunted, wanting to get this done with soon as possible.

Ye Zheng Qing frowned, the three strongest youngsters on their side were Ye Zhong, Ye Qiu, and Ye Yuan. And only Ye Zhong could match Du Xian Hong’s four stars. ‘It’s a shame we didn’t spend more time and resources on Ye Wei, he could be fighting for us today... Hope we will get through this for our families sake, our future, and I want to make it up to that boy!’

“Gramps, let me fight. I might not be able to win, but I can waste his energy and set it up as an easy fight for cousin Zhong! This is the only way!” Ye Yuan was staring at the center of the arena, thinking it would not be an easy fight.

“Gramps there’s no point. Du Xian Hong is going to toy with Yuan and will probably kill him... I will deal with this on my own!” Ye Zhong stepped up and walked in front of Ye Yuan.

“No gramps, let me!” Ye Qiu also stepped up, determined to do what she could for the family.

Grandpa was proud of how the three strongest youngsters want to work as a team to wear the Du family down, it was obvious they put the family’s honor in front of everything else. It was not a hard decision, but it was hard to actually send any of these kids out into the arena.

“Yuan, do your best!”

“It will be a game of hit and run, Yuan attack quick and then move back to safety. Waste Du Xian Hong’s energy as much as possible, make him reveal as much as possible. Make him slower and weaker. Do your best!”

“Yes!” Ye Yuan nodded, his baby face showed nothing but focus and determination as he walked up to his opponent with his head held high.

The crowd went quiet, this was history in the making.

The runicle was large and spacious ten meters long, as well as tall and wide. The shining green runes on the surface decorated it elegantly, taking the green from the structure and flying around the runicle like little stones of emerald. It almost looked like a little temple from a distance.

Though it was flat in the front, the ride was smooth because some of the runes were redirecting the turbulence and drag around the vehicle, Zi Yan and Ye Wei could not feel they were in motion at all.

The interior was luxurious; the seats and floor were covered by exquisite ferret pelts, by the seat was an elegant table crafted with the highest quality of amboine. But none of this concerned Ye Wei, his mind was still in the arena with his family!

‘Du Xian Hung is a four star Warrior, Ye Qiu, and Ye Yuan shouldn’t risk themselves, but it’s already a tight fight between cousin Zhong and Du Han Yue. If we were to start with cousin Zhong we won’t be able to win in the end... What can be done?’ The win condition for Ye family is basically for Ye Zhong to finish the first two Du contestants without showing his five star cultivation and the refined stances, if he could somehow do that and still have enough Qi while not being injured, Ye Zhong could win. But the problem is, Ye Zhong would have to fight three people which is practically impossible.

Ye Wei was confused and restless, thinking about the best scenario and ways out of this crisis for the Ye family.

“Ye Wei, are you okay? Looks like you have something on your mind?” Lin Zi Yan asked casually hoping to get an honest answer. She was not stupid and could see Ye Wei was preoccupied. For the whole ride Ye Wei was looking worried.

It was very common in Green Moon City, and even the rest of the empire, for different families to have sparring matches every so often, she had no idea what the Du family and the Ye family were fighting for.

“It’s nothing...” Ye Wei shook his head pretended nothing was wrong. The Du family, is in the end, one of the biggest establishments in Green Moon City, now that they have joined forces with general Zhou and president Dong Ye Wei he thought ‘Even if Lin Zi Yan seemed to have some influence she wouldn’t be able to do much about it.’

Master Yi was Ye Wei’s only hope!

Slowly realising he would be a key part of the family’s future, Ye Wei needed a confidence boost “Zi Yan, do you think Master Yi will accept me as a disciple?”

Chapter 26: Entry Exam

“I was able to refer you to him but to become his apprentice is not an easy task, it’s very much up to you. Your performance will be the deciding factor.” Lin Zi Yan’s well defined eyebrows moved as she answered, this meeting was a serious matter to Zi Yan because it was her who discovered Ye Wei’s talent and as such her duty to follow up.

Zi Yan was under the impression Ye Wei was acting nervous and weird because of their meeting with Master Yi, “If I were you I wouldn’t worry too much.” She tried to calm his nerves. “Your soul sensitivity is very strong, I would even say it’s close to a qualified Runemaster’s level. You are young and may not have sufficient knowledge on runes. You need to be familiar with about seventy-two volumes worth of runic knowledge before becoming a Runemaster. I guess for now that’s what you have to focus the most on. But I’m sure if you’re going to study under Master Yi, he will go through the “Sacred Rune Anthology” with you himself, coupled with his training you will become a Runemaster for sure!”

Lin Zi Yan had a relaxed smile on her face as she placed her hand behind Ye Wei’s shoulder then winked at him.

She could only do so much to encourage him when she didn’t know what his concerns were. For Ye Wei though meeting Master Yi was something far bigger than himself because his future was not as important as the family’s.

In the Zhou dynasty, Runemasters were very rare, the amount of Runemasters has decreased over the years. The influentials noticed the trend and therefore will do anything to befriend them and try not to get on their bad side because they need the Runemasters more than the Runemasters need them.

“I will do my best!” After a lot of thinking, Ye Wei realized the best thing he could do was get Master Yi’s approval, to befriend the Runemaster!

‘If I perform phenomenally and am nice, Master Yi might like me on a

personal level! Then I can ask him to help us!’

The runicle was nimble, it traveled through half of Green Moon City in the time it would take you would finish a cup of tea. They stopped next to a small mountain near the edge of town.

Mount Yu Ying was just tall enough to be called a mountain, but citizens always remembered it as a taller mountain than it really was because of who lived there.

On the top of the mountain inside a forest of purple bamboo sat a cottage made from bamboo, next to the cottage was a minimalistic courtyard and some open space where the runicle parked itself.

“We’re here!”

Lin Zi Yan exited the runicle leisurely followed by the anxious Ye Wei.

“Master Yi lives here?” Ye Wei was in awe this place could not look any more ordinary.

In Ye Wei’s mind, Master Yi was a god like figure, mysterious and untouchable. An influential person who lives in massive palace, not the ruins that were in front of him. It was the complete opposite of what he had imagined.

A dull small mountain, a messy courtyard, and a simple bamboo house, how can anyone with standards live here?

“Master Yi!” Lin Zi Yan stood in front of the courtyard and called for the Runemaster with a loud a clear voice.

“Boom!”

As Zi Yan’s words left her mouth, sounds of a vigorous explosion came from the purple bamboo house followed by someone falling on the doorsteps. The unkempt old man in rags screamed as he clumsily ran into the courtyard. “Ouch!”

“Failure! Failure again! I don’t remember creating a mid level Myst stance being this hard!” The old man spoke to himself as he dug his fingers through his loose hair, scratching his scalp.

“Master Yi!” The Runemaster’s disarray made Lin Zi Yan embarrassed. She put her palm on her face and laughed awkwardly at Ye Wei.

Ye Wei could not believe his eyes. ‘This sloppy guy is Master Yi? His face looks like an old shoe!’

This was in no way how Ye Wei expected it, he’s a dirty geezer!

“Hey cutie, when did you get here?” He finally noticed Zi Yan’s arrival and looked at the two with a silly grin on his face.

“Just now actually, this is Ye Wei the boy I spoke to you about!” Zi Yan smiled back and introduced the Master to Yi Wei, entering the house as they spoke.

“Greetings! Master Yi!” Ye Wei immediately bowed down respectfully.

Master Yi’s face turned straight all of a sudden, and he stared at Ye Wei with a penetrating gaze. Ye Wei felt a shiver go down his spine, he felt completely transparent. He gained respect for the Runemaster, this kind of presence he just felt was extraordinary.

“Impressive soul sensitivity!” Satisfied by what he was looking at Master Yi gave him a nod of approval.

“This cutie here said you refined Triple Tidal Palm, and that there is now a mid level Spirit version of the stance?” Master Yi asked Ye Wei openly while he looked at Ye Wei carefully from head to toe as if it was some kind of inspection.

“You relied solely on your soul sensitivity when you upgraded the stance right? That is a good start!”

“Humm, I should test your runic knowledge and rune consonance before anything else. Soul sensitivity alone can’t count as a good foundation if you want me to train you!” Master Yi played with his patchy beard as he spoke.

“Rune consonance?” Ye Wei hesitated, he has never heard of this term before.

“That’s right, to become a Runemaster you need all three to be at a high

level!”

“The most valuable trait of a Runemaster is the ability to create stances. How well one can manipulate runes and how much energy you can get out of the runes is determined by your rune consonance level. If you can’t manipulate them and unleash the runes power you can’t possible create anything and there will be no point continuing if your consonance is bad!

“But Master Yi, Ye Wei is not a seven star Student yet, he doesn’t have enough Qi to draw runes!” Lin Zi Yan was concerned about her student’s future.

“Don’t worry about that, I have a method!” Master Yi giggled. As a Runemaster he had many special tricks up his sleeves!

Ye Wei was getting increasingly nervous, not even knowing what rune consonance was before being tested on it; he felt he was out of his depth.

“This is the Runemaster apprenticeships entry exam from last year. I will give you six hours to do as much as you can. I would like to see what level your runic knowledge is at from the result.”

Master Yi looked around his desk and found a thick stack of books which he then passed to Ye Wei.

“Okay!” Ye Wei nodded, he quickly took the stack of books off Master Yi’s hands, time was of the essence, his cousins’ lives were at risk back home in the arena.

Ye Wei didn’t wait, he picked up the books and started right away. After reading the first question he immediately froze...

Chapter 27: Peerless

Were the questions difficult?

All the questions on the paper were all written by Master Yi himself and he was very strict when it came to recruiting a new apprentice. The questions were designed to be challenging even for experienced scholars who have been studying runes for decades.

Seeing how Ye Wei froze up, Lin Zi Yan frowned and was getting a bit nervous. ‘What is going on? Is it too hard for him?’

They should not be easy, but he should be able to pick a couple easy questions and write a couple of lines!

Lin Zi Yan looked straight at Ye Wei while she was gripping her hand tightly, hoping Ye Wei would be able to handle the pressure; there was faith in her bright eyes.

Master Yi thought Ye Wei was still a bit too young. No matter how strong his soul sensitivity was it would not make up for his lack of runic knowledge.. Master Yi wanted to humble Ye Wei with this impossible challenge so he would become an obedient apprentice and focus on learning.

“If you want to become a Runemaster you have to develop not only your soul sensitivity, but runic knowledge, and consonance all at the same speed with no exceptions. There is no simple and easy path!” Master Yi said calmly he had assessed thousands, if not tens of thousands, of youngsters and every one of them was gifted and extraordinarily intelligent. However, there were only a few of them who could satisfy his high standards, satisfy but nothing more.

Ye Wei was calm and collected, he expected himself not to know the answers to all the questions that was normal and acceptable for a thirteen year old.

However that wasn’t the case, as Ye Wei looked through the questions, the golden spark appeared in his Sentient again, the answers to the

questions suddenly appeared from deep inside his mind where all kind of runic knowledge was etched not long ago from that strange dream.

He naturally picked up his pen and his writing hand flew over the sheets, composing line after line of information he was aware of.

Answering the questions exposed him to other perspectives than what he knew about runes, and he slowly started to understand the purpose of every curve and line of different rune.

‘I wonder if they have started fighting yet... hope nobody is hurt!’ Ye Wei was completely focused on the task at hand.

‘Hang in there cousins! I will come back with help very very soon!’ Ye Wei held his pen with a tight grip and resumed answering the questions swiftly.

His eyes were glued to the exam while his hands were writing sentence after sentence at an incredible speed.

Master Yi was saddened by the scene and he shook his head in disappointment. He was starting to think Ye Wei was just scrawling in a panic.

It would take around two hours for a qualified Runemaster to answer all these question, but judging by Ye Wei’s speed he would have the whole thing done in around ten minutes. In Master Yi’s mind, Ye Wei was just scribbling irrelevant nonsense.

It’s okay if you don’t know the answer, you don’t have to embarrass yourself even further...

Master Yi could not bear to witness it any longer. He closed his eyes and started thinking about how to finish creating the Myst stance he was earlier working on. He didn’t want to read what Ye Wei was writing down.

Zi Yan was aware of Master Yi’s indifference, she smiled bitterly and let out a reluctant sigh. It was obvious the master was not satisfied with Ye Wei.

Lin Zi Yan headed towards Ye Wei and took a peek at the answers on

his sheet, she had no idea what Ye Wei was saying at all.

“Master Yi, please take a look!” It didn’t take Ye Wei very long before he put his pen down on the table, he exhaled relaxingly as he finished. After stacking the answer sheets into a tidy pile, he respectfully handed them to Master Yi.

“Sure!” Master Yi responded casually, he was still in his own world of runes and stances, and didn’t really show any interest to his surroundings especially because he assumed Ye Wei was writing nonsense.

Ye Wei didn’t appreciate the apathy as he stared at Master Yi in confusion he then turned his head towards Zi Yan, ‘Why isn’t he checking my papers?’ Trying to telepathically ask Zi Yan if he was usually this cold.

“Master Yi! Fire!” Lin Zi Yan finally did something about it.

“Hey cutie, what’s up” Master Yi snapped out of his daydream and looked innocently at Zi Yan.

“Ye Wei just finished!” Zi Yan said.

“Already?” Master Yi managed to articulate while being stunned for a moment. Taking the papers from Ye Wei’s hands, “If there was anything you didn’t understand while answering the questions, you should write them down on a note while you still remember them and do some research on the topics. The body of runic knowledge as vast and deep as the ocean, you will find yourself still learning something new when you’re decades into studying. You’re still young, use your time well...”

Master Yi stopped talking mid-word and open his eyes wide as he started flipping through the pages and checking the answers. He shivered and his hands started shaking.

‘The first answer is correct!’

‘The second one, correct!’

‘The third... fourth... fifth... are correct!’

Master Yi squinted his eyes in disbelief as he scanned through the

pages, his mouth slowly opened subconsciously.

“Uhh, how is this possible!?”

Curious and shocked, Master Yi went through the answer sheets as quick as he could, not only did he not spot any mistakes the answer Ye Wei wrote were very precise and well structured, they were perfect!

Master Yi could not believe his eyes, he flipped through the pages back and forth, carefully re-checking the whole thing three times before he gently place the answer sheets on the table then suspiciously looked at Ye Wei.

An ordinary Runemaster would need two hours to answer these questions with mistakes here and there, but a mere thirteen year old child took only ten minutes to answer the whole thing perfectly. It was absolute madness!

“Master Yi, what’s wrong?” Seeing Master Yi’s complicated facial expression, Lin Zi Yan was worried for Ye Wei.

Ye Wei too turned his head towards Master Yi, he was pretty confident, but in the end it was more or less effortless for him to finish the task.

Ye Wei’s heart was racing while he looked at Master Yi’s strange facial expression. He desperately wanted the Runemaster’s approval so hopefully he could make an impact on the crisis his family was facing, with the aid of the ultimate power in Green Moon City.

“Are you not just thirteen? This is very strange?” Master Yi gave Ye Wei a weird look again trying to remember himself when he was thirteen, even the talented child he was could not have done what Ye Wei just accomplished.

‘His soul sensibility is ridiculous and with this kind of understanding of runes... Even with mediocre consonance this kid is a rare find. He can shine bright like a diamond with a little polishing!’

Genius are always very hard to fathom.

“Ye Wei, you were born to be a Runemaster! This kind of powerful soul

sensitivity is rare, despite that I have seen it before, but your understanding about the nature of runes is peerless, if you're not going to become a Runemaster you are wasting your life!" Master Yi was emotional, he just found the disciple of a lifetime.

Chapter 28: Flaming Golden Lotus Stance

Lin Zi Yan had never witnessed Master Yi complimenting anyone. After the shock and processing the situation, a joyful smile shone from her face. Then she quickly walked up to Master Yi.

“Master Yi, how did he do?” Zi Yan asked curiously, with that beautiful smile her face looked even prettier than it usually did.

“To my standards, he answered perfectly! I definitely underestimated him in the end. It’s unbelievable how much he knows about runes considering he has only been living for thirteen years!” Master Yi exclaimed, when he was thirteen his understanding of runes was elementary!

This was the standard entry exam of Master Yi’s on runic knowledge. From experience, youths ages twenty to thirty would be lucky if they answered sixty percent of the questions correctly and the people who could reach seventy percent were considered geniuses.

Last year when Master Yi recruited apprentices, there were thirty-eight candidates in total. Only four people got sixty percent on the entry exam and nobody reached seventy percent.

Ye Wei answered all the questions perfectly and with incredible speed on top of his accuracy!

“Ye Wei, what will happen now is that I am going to test your rune consonance, with your soul sensitivity and runic knowledge, if your conscience is not too shabby then I will be able to do something with you!” Master Yi smiled at Ye Wei, it had been quite a while since Master Yi was enthusiastic about a candidate. He who was usually calm and collected could not wait to test Ye Wei’s rune consonance.

As the Runemaster mentioned, to become a Runemaster Ye Wei would need soul sensibility, runic knowledge, and rune consonance. Without anyone of the three, it was not possible to become a Runemaster!

“Sure!” Ye Wei nodded, he was confident at this point due to the praise,

he just wanted to get the formality done with and ask Master Yi for help. He was way more relaxed now that he had two out of three topics covered.

“Ye Wei, you can do it!” Lin Zi Yan clenched her little fist and cheered for Ye Wei.

This was the last step!

“Thanks Zi Yan!”

Ye Wei smiled and nodded his eyes sparkling with confidence.

“I know you have a red Sentient, but you should not worry about these small details. Sentient is not that important to us, Runemasters, it wouldn’t be a problem even if your Sentient was black!” Master Yi stared at Ye Wei, his eyes flashing inside his black irises you could faintly see runes appearing, decomposing then reassembling. Suddenly the room was filled with the master’s majestic invisible energy.

Ye Wei and Lin Zi Yan felt as if they were two little rafts drifting in an ocean of runes.

Astounding power! It was a lot denser than a seven star Condensed Prime Warrior’s energy Du Patriarch made Ye Wei experience just a while ago!

Though Master Yi’s real power should be even more monstrous than this!

Then the unthinkable happened. The ceiling was covered by phantoms of blooming golden lotuses. A grand and mysterious monastery was vaguely visible in another dimension behind the curtain of flowers, and a loud bell chime could be heard.

Is this the Mythical Holy Conservatory? It was a belief that only the most powerful Runemasters could summon the Conservatory and seems like Master Yi maybe one of them!

This is the Flaming Golden Lotus Stance, it was passed down from the Holy Conservatory to test one’s rune consonance. Its purpose is to

physically express the performer's potential therefore it was not a graded stance.

"This test is very simple, I just need you to focus when you perform this stance, if three flaming lotuses appear, it's a pass; if four appear it's a distinction; if five or above appear I will give you a kiss!" Master Yi looked at Ye Wei and started sketching in the air using will-force and Qi on his finger as ink.

In no time, Master Yi finished drawing eighty-one runes. They were quietly floating in the air and shone with golden brilliance as Qi passed through them, remolding the runes into four glamorous golden lotuses. They were on fire and the heat wave quickly diffused, filling up the room!

Master Yi's Flaming Golden Lotus Stance bloomed four lotuses, his rune consonance belonged to the high level; it was nothing too exceptional, but it got him to where he was today. Consonance is something that does not get better alongside one's cultivation, what you are born with will stay the same for the rest of your life!

"Ye Wei, now it is your turn!" Master Yi placed his hand on Ye Wei's shoulder, lending Ye Wei Qi from his seemingly bottomless dantain. Ye Wei felt extremely energised and sensitive to his surrounding, so this was what it feels like to be powerful.

Lending Qi to others is one of the tricks only Runemasters can do.

This is the only way Ye Wei could perform a stance without reaching seven star Student level!

"Okay!" Ye Wei nodded again. This time though he did it with a straight face. He was completely focused while observing the eighty-one floating runes.

Inhale, exhale, inhale, exhale...

Ye Wei's body undulated at the speed he was breathing, it was faster than normal due to his nerves. Performing the Flaming Golden Lotus stance was the last obstacle he needed to tackle before becoming Master Yi's apprentice.

He could not wait to show everyone; gramps who was stressed, his strict but caring big uncle, his protective parents, that he was worth something to the family. And now is the critical moment, if he can save the family by bringing Master Yi to the arena it would be the best contribution anyone could give the family!

He always wanted to be a functional member, ever since the entry exam when he learned about his red Sentient, the thought had been implanted deep in his mind. Three lotuses, that was all he needed to become who he wanted to be.

He studied the eighty-one golden runes Master Yi drew carefully, then he closed his eyes and made sure he remembers every changes and turn of the sequence. He started to draw rune after rune.

He kept a very slow pace, he was paying attention to every single detail as if his life depended on it; it took him a long while before finishing!

All three people present in the room were holding their breath as the eighty-first rune was drawn.

How many?

Lin Zi Yan wanted the best for him, whereas Master Yi was just curious and Ye Wei just wanted to save his family's future; they wanted different things but they were all desperate to see the result.

"Bup, bup, bup..."

Ye Wei's heart was beating like crazy, he could hear his own heartbeat while staring at the runes he just drew. He felt like time had stopped, just staring and hoping he would get at least three lotuses.

Chapter 29: Master Yi's Dilemma

Inhale, exhale...

Heartbeats and breathing were the only things audible in the quiet room.

The eighty-one runes were still floating in the air as time passed, nothing happened. The `runes were stationary and there was no Qi flow at all!

Not even one golden lotus had bloomed.

Drops of sweat started to appear on Ye Wei's forehead as he was staring at the eighty-one runes and feeling helpless while swallowing his saliva.

The sound of Ye Wei's heavy breathing remained the only audible sound in the room, five breaths...ten breaths had passed!

The runes remained the same, no signs of it turning into a stance!

"How is this possible?!" Master Yi opened his eyes wide and looked at the eighty-one runes Ye Wei left floating in the air. He checked the sequence three times from start to finish.

The sequence itself contained no mistakes and it was identical to what Master Yi drew, but there were no golden lotuses, why didn't it work?

This was too weird!

Even ordinary Warriors who had no potential to become Runemasters would be able to make one or two lotuses appear when they perform the Flaming Golden Lotus stance!

"What is going on?" Zi Yan was also shocked by the motionless set of runes in the air. What does this mean? This indicated Ye Wei's rune consonance was non-existent. Even if he becomes a seven star Student, had enough Qi and will-force he would not be able to perform a stance! There were a few good stories of red Sentient fighters with a good ending, namely Supreme Chen Feng who became a household name. But it seems Ye Wei's story would not end as gloriously.

“...No flaming lotuses at all... Does that mean my consonance level is zero?” There was an extremely bitter, self-deprecating smile on Ye Wei’s childish face.

Ye Wei went through a couple of possible outcomes before drawing the rune, hoping that at least one lotus would bloom, and of course he would be happy with more. But never did he think it would turn out like this... Master Yi had experimented with non-cultivators in the past and even the most ordinary townsfolk could make one lotus appear. It was less than one in a hundred thousand chance that a cultivator had zero rune consonance.

Guess Ye Wei was a rare catch!

This was so unfair!

Why give me hope if I was destined to fail! Ye Wei was heartbroken; he was screaming and crying in his mind, bottomless sorrow could be felt by looking in his eyes.

Lin Zi Yan looked at Master Yi and wanted an explanation, but he didn’t say a word. All he did was shaking his head in disappointment. He thought he had found a huge gemstone with potential, but it turned out to be a piece of broken glass.

“Ye Wei, be strong!” Lin Zi Yan sighed, she was worried for Ye Wei because of how fragile she assumed he was. She slowly walked up to him and placed her delicate hand on Ye Wei’s shoulder patting him.

“It’s not a big deal that you can’t perform a stance with your runic knowledge and soul sensitivity, you will be respected. I assume it will be easy for you to help some Runemasters with their projects!”

“Even if you can’t perform stances and you can’t train I swear on my family’s honor that I will not let anyone wrong you!” Lin Zi Yan continued trying to comfort him.

“On your family’s honor?” Master Yi looked at the tulip that was embroidered onto Zi Yan’s robe. Ye Wei didn’t understand what Zi Yan’s promise meant but Master Yi most certainly did. He knew very well how

old and deeply etched into society her family was, and how they respect and honor allies. ‘Zi Yan and this boy get along that well?’

“Sigh! Such a shame!” Master Yi looked disappointedly at Ye Wei, his runic knowledge and soul sensitivity were already at the right level, if it were not for his consonance Master Yi was confident he could make Ye Wei a Runemaster in less than three years. He was getting excited just thinking about being the teacher of a sixteen year old genius!

Who would have thought Ye Wei’s rune consonance was this terrible, bad enough to make his excellent rune knowledge and soul sensitivity useless.

Ye Wei clenched his fists because the situation was not great but at least it was better than what he had before the dream. Ye Wei’s eyes showed determination, despite the disappointment he was ready to keep fighting and keep training as giving up was not an option.

“Master Yi, I would like to ask a favour... The Du family, one of the Big Three, in Green Moon City are plotting against my Ye family. They are trying to take our ancestral land where our family grave is located. If you don’t mind I would like you to help us in resolving the dispute between us!” Even if Ye Wei didn’t make it as Master Yi’s apprentice, he swallowed his pride for the sake of his family and requested Master Yi’s aid.

“It’s not that I don’t want to help, but I have had a good life staying out of others’ business, and I think my life being good is the result of not interfering these types of matters...” Master Yi frowned and answered hesitantly.

Ye Wei got the hint, he was not related to Master Yi in anyway and it would be awkward for him to get involved as in the end the Du family was a force to be reckoned with in Green Moon City. Master Yi would lose more than he would gain from helping Ye Wei.

Asking Master Yi for help as an apprentice is completely different than asking as a failed applicant who scored zero on the rune consonance test. Sometimes reality can be very far from one’s expectations!

If he stays here any longer and begs for Master Yi’s help it will just

come across as being annoying!

Ye Wei couldn't stand the silence, "Anyways, thank you Master Yi and Zi Yan for your time and this chance, sorry for disappointing you two. I will remember this favour and be forever grateful for it! Master Yi, Zi Yan, you will have to excuse me I need to go back home and deal with matters!"

Ye Wei bowed to Master Yi and Lin Zi Yan, then he dashed out of the bamboo cottage and without looking back ran towards the Ye family mansion.

"Cousin Qiu, cousin Xian, and cousin Zhong please be okay!" Ye Wei didn't waste his time worrying about himself or being sad. It was way more important to see if he could help his family!

Mount Yu Ying was not in anyway a big mountain and Ye Wei was now a three star Student, his strength, speed, and stamina were much greater than before. He was agile and fast like a monkey, jumping from one tree to the other descending down the mountain.

"So that's why all the people were gathering at the Ye family's arena? It was a bit strange that General Zhou and his men were there... Dong Ho the Ling He Merchant Guild's president was also there too now that I think about it!"

"The Ye family must be in real trouble. It's a second class family against one of the Big Three!"

"Ye Wei you silly boy, why didn't you just tell me your family was in trouble?" Lin Zi Yan finally realized how dire the situation was and she sighed heavily. Ye Wei was the exact type who would hide things just because he didn't want to bother others, but he didn't know how influential Lin Zi Yan's family was and how effortless they could resolve the problem at hand!

"Master Yi, I have to go!" Zi Yan decided to get involved as she waved Master Yi goodbye and headed out to her runicle.

Master Yi watched as Ye Wei left the building. The determination and

the stubbornness he saw in Ye Wei's eyes really touched him. 'A weird thirteen year old with a mind that strong... Maybe I can do something with him!'

"Oh screw it! I will break my rules this one time!" Master Yi sighed, he enjoyed being a hermit but he could sense Ye Wei was something special. "Cutie! I'll come with you! Your family isn't with you today, if things get nasty I will have your back!"

Now Master Yi is on Ye Wei's side, Lin Zi Yan was relieved and over the moon, as she was having a little bit of a headache thinking about how to deal with the situation on her own.

"Okay, let's not waste any time!" Zi Yan nodded.

As they stepped foot into the runicle they noticed a flash of bright light in the cottage.

"What was that?" They thought confused.

Chapter 30: Blossom

“Swish!”

A loud noise caught the attention of Master Yi and Zi Yan. They turned around and tried to find the source of the disturbance. Lin Zi Yan felt a warm burst of energy coming from the cottage so she went back inside the house closely followed by Master Yi.

As they entered the cottage they discovered the sequence of pale golden runes that Ye Wei drew were still floating in the air after all this time. The two were not sure when it started to oscillate, the runes were also slithering in the air like a snake as if they had a mind of their own. The runes started to expand in every direction while transforming and radiating colors of the rainbow.

The Qi flowed at an extremely high speed through the sequence and it was accelerating. Eventually the friction was so great that the runes started emitting a sizzling sound and sparks were visible as it cut through air.

Master Yi and Zi Yan were gobsmacked. Their feet grew roots by the doorway and their eyes were wide open set on the eighty-one runes that they did not know still existed.

At this point the Qi Master Yi lent to Ye Wei had already dispersed. The runes Ye Wei drew were not forming a stance hence the absence of golden lotuses, but despite this they did not disappear. The sequence was absorbing primal energy from the air and the earth to sustain itself, ridding and replacing Master Yi's Qi within it!

The runes kept absorbing energy from their surrounding and grew in size all while transforming themselves. The sequence was twisting and reassembling. For both Master Yi and Lin Zi Yan, It was the first time to witness a rune sequence operating and evolving itself, their jaws were on the floor.

After an hour of stabilizing, the sequence of runes shrank into a bright formless cluster of energy. The noise of Qi flowing resembled the roar of

a waterfall crashing down. The shining runes finally started to take shape as the noise echoed in the room. It was flowering season for golden lotuses...

“Are they finally going to bloom or what!?” Master Yi was trying to figure out why the rune sequence did not work and the blooming was delayed so long. After staring at the cluster and feeling its energy he began to understand what was going on “My Qi was not adequate to Ye Wei’s unique and powerful will-force, there was no way his Flaming Golden Lotus stance could run off the energy I lent him!”

That was the only way to explain this bizarre phenomenon, it was a rare occurrence that Master Yi had never before encountered. Ye Wei’s astoundingly powerful will-force was very picky and it bluntly rejected Master Yi’s Qi opting to acquiring raw and stronger primal energy on its own.

Assuming that was the case, the two were now excited to see how many lotuses were going to bloom. Moments after, a few spikes started to break out from the cluster and take the shape of flaming lotuses as expected!

One, two, three, four, five!?

“Am I hallucinating? Five!” Master Yi was regretful! He could not believe he just casually dismissed a potential successor! Ye Wei had what it takes to surpass Master Yi, himself, if he was given appropriate training...

“Five lotuses! This is amazing!” Lin Zi Yan was emotional; she was happy for Ye Wei and pleased by the surprise her satisfying smile spoke a thousand words.

Just as they thought that it was over because the sequence calmed down, it started spinning around again more sparks were ignited by a violent burst of energy. A bigger and brighter golden lotus bloomed from one of the larger sparks and set itself aflame, blinding both Master Yi and Lin Zi Yan.

“The sixth!” Master Yi’s voice broke as he shouted, he had an adrenaline spike as he witness this extraordinary moment!

“He has the legendary level of rune consonance! If the news is spread, Ye Wei will put Green Moon City in the spotlight of the whole empire! There are less than five people with this kind of gift in the whole dynasty!” He exclaimed and explained to Lin Zi Yan what kind of genius Ye Wei actually was.

“He has Legendary level rune consonance?!” Lin Zi Yan was rubbing her eyes in awe, just to make sure what she was seeing was real.

Just as they finished speaking, the cluster was dimming and shrank to the size of a large watermelon.

“Pop!”

The cluster was dying down and the final burst of energy set the runes on fire. It looked like it was starting to engulf itself. But instead of disappearing, an even larger and brighter lotus emerged from the small fireball!

“Seven golden lotuses!? His rune consonance is at the Supreme level!?” Master Yi was completely horrified. He nearly forgot to breathe, his eyes looked like they were about to fall out of their sockets. From what he read, ever gifted person with Legendary level consonance ended up being God’s prime Warriors or even Supremes! It was the first time in centuries someone with Supreme level rune consonance had surfaced.

“If he didn’t sleep and didn’t shout in my lecture I would never have noticed him!” Lin Zi Yan too was shocked. She found someone that might end up in the history books from the most unexpected place.

“What we just saw stays in this room!” Master Yi looked at Lin Zi Yan with a hysterical gaze. “If anyone learns what Ye Wei possesses, he will be approached and bothered by different powers. This kind of potential will also make him a target for assassination by family enemies and maybe even demon tribes! The world’s attention was not what he needs now, but privacy and space to train. Master Yi was desperate to protect Ye Wei by covering up this information.

A thirteen year old genius should never be burdened because of his talents, although in Master Yi’s eyes, Ye Wei was not a genius but a

demon child. He was very aware of the dark side of Ye Wei's potential. It meant that if he falls into the wrong hands, he could grow into an uncontrollable nefarious force.

Lin Zi Yan on the other hand was more jolly and positive: "Ye Wei is destined to become what he wants to be! I think the Ye family will reach new heights with him as the Patriarch!" She was smiling with an open mouth, her deep purple eyes were filled with hope and happiness. But then she realised something!

"Damn it! We have wasted too much time here. I think Ye Wei might already have gotten home... The Du family and their partners in crime are ganging up on the Ye family!"

"If Ye Wei ends up hurt because of them. I will make sure Green Moon Castle becomes empty for a while... As well as the the Du family's and Ling He Merchant Guild's grounds." Lin Zi Yan's eyes turned violet even Master Yi had never seen her this mad.

"Master Yi, we have to hurry! I don't want to live in regret for the rest of my life..."

Every single talent counts when it comes to combating the demons. Protecting Ye Wei is protecting humanity in Master Yi's point of view. "From this moment on, Ye Wei is my apprentice if anyone harms a hair on his head then they will taste my wrath, whomever it maybe." He declared in a ruthless voice. He knew very well that it would be impossible to find an apprentice of the same calibre again even if he went searching to the edge of the world.

Master Yi added a couple more runes to the runicle to boost its speed before they took off. It was now a race against time!

The seven golden lotuses were still floating in the air. The golden glint slowly fading, revealing the true colors of the lotuses underneath. Each lotus had a different luminous glow. This was a phenomenon that even a Master would not be able to explain if he had witnessed it. Ye Wei's rainbow coloured Flaming Golden Lotus stance finally faded without a trace...

The fight started soon after Ye Wei took off with Lin Zi Yan, and it was now in full swing!

“You piece of garbage why do you even try!?”

Ye Xuan was on the ground, heavily injured. Du Xian Hong’s foot was on his chest. It was no surprise the four star Warrior would dominate and toy with the three star Warrior, but Du Xian Hong was taking it even further. With brute force he stepped on Ye Xuan’s rib cage and broke three ribs. A twisted sadistic smile was on the bully’s face as he spat on Ye Xuan’s face. In shame and agony Ye Xuan coughed up a stream of blood...

Early on Ye Xuan was overpowered by Du Xian Hong’s high level Spirit stance. He was forced to the ground after a few attempts to parry and dodge the ferocious attacks, before he could even fight back. All he achieved was making Du Xian Hong use a small amount of Qi.

“Is this really all you’ve got?!” Du Xian Hong exclaimed as his opponent fainted. He then lifted his foot in the air. “Hey, wake up!” Down went his foot again, this time it landed on Ye Xuan’s arm.

His hysterical laughter accompanied by the sound of bones cracking echoed in the arena.

Chapter 31: Best Served Warm

“Crack! Crack! Crack!” Du Xian Hong’s stare was cold but his smile was warm. He was enthusiastic and not easily satisfied when it came to torturing others. His footwork was as fast as lightning; the way he broke Ye Xuan’s right arm and both legs happened in a flash as the three stomps took only a second!

Ye Xuan’s groan echoed in the arena sending shivers down the Ye’s spines, his family’s aching hearts ignited their anger and there was nothing they wanted more than revenge for the disrespect and torture.

‘These guys... They really don’t care about their relation with the Ye family after this duel! Maybe the Du family plans to wipe them out here and now?’

The audience was shocked into silence and chilled by the violence. They came here for a fight and entertainment, but this... this was way more than what they had expected.

“Stop!!”

Ye Zhong shouted as his veins bulged on his head. His bloodshot eyes made it apparent that he wanted Du Yin Hong in pieces; that he wanted to inflict unnecessary pain in the process giving him a taste of his own medicine. There was a good chance his cousin would get paralysed from this.

“Yin Hong, you can stop it now. We are friendly people after all. Even if they are rubbish they deserve a place somewhere in society. Also remember we are the guests. We should respect other families!” Rubbing salt in his opponent’s wounds was one of Du Yuan Ming’s specialties. He kept a straight face while smiling as he spoke.

Everyone watching understood the mockery but they could not understand the reason for their aggression.

“The Du family is surely the nicest family out of the Big Three. Them beating the Ye’s would actually be a favour to them as they don’t have

any worthy young blood! I mean, if you want to call yourself a family you should at least have... I don't know, at least a five star Warrior who is less than twenty-five years old, right? Don't give them silly thoughts and false hopes. The young ones should be more realistic and learn their place. Hahaha!" General Zhou fancied the bit of abuse too.

"Can't you guys be constructive?" President Dong Ho said, "The only thing Du family ever wanted was a little plot of land. If I were you I would just sell the land and earn some money. There is no point in being dramatic about it!" His belly wobbled as he laughed. "There is a fine line between dignity and stupidity and everyone can see which of these two you guys are closer to."

Ye Zheng Qing did not take this topic light-heartedly. His fists were clenched, he was tired of the harassment and felt extremely frustrated. It was partially true the Ye family was not doing well, but the bullying was completely out of line. He wanted Ye Zhong to give it his best shot hoping the surprise tactic he mentioned during training would work out.

"Ye Patriarch, I have to apologise for the young one he's still very new to the scene therefore very bad at controlling himself. I will scold him when this is all over, please don't take it too personal!" Said Du Yuan Ming, his fake smile was not much more convincing than his horrible speech.

"No, Ye Xuan should have protected himself better." Ye Zheng Qing tried to sound cool and indifferent, refusing to give Du Yuan Ming any satisfaction.

As soon as the exchange of words died down Ye Hai leaped into the arena and carefully lifted Ye Xuan up.

Healthy would be the last word to describe Ye Xuan's critical condition. His breathing was light, weak, and fading! Even a tough man like Ye Hai could not remain calm in this situation, his eyes were red and wet. He wiped off his tears right after pushing a pill down Ye Xuan's throat.

"Zhong, please take care of yourself. Your cousin is not well, three broken ribs, fractured arms and legs... You know what to do!" Ye Zheng Qing's warm palm rubbed Ye Zhong's shoulder.

“I know exactly what you mean.”

He knew grandpa was angry and so was he, but surprise was his only chance so he kept a cool look and a small smile on his face. But deep in his mind, he was imagining himself destroying Du Xian Hong, the word mercy has been forgotten.

“Ye Xuan, you have done your best. I will make him pay! Get even for you, and more.” He was thinking out loud, but the mumble was not really audible for anyone but himself. He was mentally ready and after taking a deep breath he headed into the arena with clenched fists.

His robe flowed gracefully as he leaped onto the stage, as much as he wanted to cover up his aggression his veins bulged and his beastlike posture gave everything away. It was obvious to anyone who knew him that this was not the normal, calm and collected Ye Zhong.

“Are there any talents in the Ye family? By the looks of things I can take out the trash on my own!” Du Xian Hong was c*cky from his domination over Ye Xuan. He was completely relaxed when he aimed his arrogant glare at Ye Zhong and spoke with disdain.

He was not aware that Ye Zhong was no longer a four star Warrior. In his mind, even though Ye Zhong had the same cultivation as himself he already had an answer to the threat. “Cultivation is not everything. I can beat you easily... because I have what we call talent!” He based his confidence on mastering a peak high level Spirit stance which was a secret to everyone outside the family.

“It’s funny how much stronger our family’s youngsters are. To me it is a sad thing that a four star Warrior is all your family’s young generation has to offer! Let’s see how many seconds you can last, hopefully you won’t go down quicker than that piece of rubbish did.” Du Xian Hong laughed and beckoned arrogantly.

Ye Zhong did not waste a single second, he wiggled his fingers at lightning speed. Just as Du Xian Hong finished talking there were already seventy-two runes flying around Ye Zhong. They glowed and transformed into a wave under his feet.

High level Spirit stance, Spindrift Steps!

Ye Zhong placed his feet onto the crest of a wave, his body disappearing leaving behind a splashing sound. A blurry flash was now approaching Du Xian Hong and the raging Ye Zhong was not slowing down in the slightest.

“Whoosh!”

In the blink of an eye he was in front of Du Xian Hong's face, and his fist was covered in a silver texture, held behind his head like an arrow on a drawn bow aimed at his target.

Ye Zhong's plan to hide his five star cultivation failed completely. Only Warriors who are five stars or higher have the ability to materialise their Qi on any part of their bodies, if his lightning speed wasn't obvious enough, this materialization would be.

Ye Zhong's posture resembled a pouncing cheetah, the tensed up muscles all over his body were shaking like they were about to explode. His fist that was breaking through the air, created a loud whistling sound.

‘This is not what a four star Warrior can do,’ Du Yuan Hong's eyes were wide open, Ye Zhong's fist was covering more and more of his vision as it approached. He subconsciously raised his guard.

That split second decision might have saved Du Yuan Hong's life as the fist was deflected, but with had the momentum of a sledgehammer it passed through his guard and landed right between his collarbones.

“Crack!”

Both bones in each of his arms and six of his ribs cracked like twigs as Ye Zhong's fist powered through leaving a dent in his chest.

The difference between a four star and a five star Warrior was too vast, it was bound to be a one sided slaughter regardless of Ye Zhong's rage. His ruthlessness and aggression just made it look even more one sided.

“Now you are going to pay. With interest!” Ye Zhong said as he walked slowly towards Du Xian Hong who has been knocked ten yards away by

the impact. His face was deathly pale and full of fear as if he was looking at the the grim reaper.

Du Xian Hong's confidence was replaced by an immense sense of fear, "Please don't! I surrender! Just let m..."

"Boom!"

Ye Zhong's silver fist landed on Xian Hong's face, torso, upper arms, and thighs. They each carried the weight of a mountain and landed in such a rapid succession that it sounded as if only one punch connected.

He did not hold back. Though most of the audience couldn't see how it happened, they knew from the silver texture on Ye Zhong's fist that he was at least a five star Warrior. Though they were not as shocked than the Du family was. A couple of spies were about to be punished and maybe fired.

"So there will be a fight after all! And this Ye Zhong kid has some future ahead of him!"

The crowd was speculating and the people from other big families who came to scout were getting worried. If the Ye family lives through today they might become a threat with young Ye Zhong's potential to become a condensed prime Warrior in a few years.

Ye Zhong was furious, but he didn't lose his cool and could still control his bloodlust. Du Xian Hong only had a few unbroken bones in his body which was now bleeding internally. There was a good chance of paralysis but it was fair in a way. If Ye Zhong would have stopped any later he would have taken his opponent's life. Giving the Du family an excuse for revenge was not the best idea as they brought support with them to the arena.

"Zhong, you can stop now. We are friendly people. Let's show some respect to our guests! Making the Big Three lose face in front of that many people was not very considerate." Ye Zheng Qing copied the Du Patriarch's words and tone. Sometimes revenge is best served warm.

The Ye family were gentle people but they had never been afraid of

confrontations, no matter what the obstacles may be.

Chapter 32: Trump Card

“Old Du, the young ones are hot-headed aren’t they! I am sorry your grandson was injured, hopefully he will recover quickly. I will have a serious talk with Ye Zhong when this is over, as you mentioned just now it’s not very nice to stomp your opponents like that especially when they’re rubbish, it’s hardly constructive is it?” Ye Zheng Qing waved slightly and bowed making an apologetic gesture.

‘An eye for an eye!’

Du Yuan Ming was ashen-faced as he viciously stared at Ye Zheng Qing.

‘Ye Zhong you sneaky child! You’ve been hiding your breakthrough all this time when we were training? How did you, how could you?’ Ye Patriarch was as glad as he was puzzled. Then he realised everything was linked. That the night he heard the tiger’s roars were related to Ye Wei’s soul sensibility and that Ye Zhong actually broke through thanks to his little cousin’s soul sensibility.

‘My family can become great again! I have to somehow lead us out of this mess so the young ones can blossom. Even the weakest of them is showing great potential, I can’t let their efforts go to waste.’ He saw the silver lining during their darkest hours. If little Wei can achieve something seemingly impossible so could he.

“Little Zhong is full of surprises!” Ye Yi wore a satisfying smile as he turned to the others and said.

“Yi, brother, thank you.” Ye Hai answered as a few drops of tears ran down his face.

Ye Yi as well realised his son contributed vastly to Ye Zhong’s breakthrough, he felt like a better father and was extremely proud of his son. He had seldom gotten appreciation from his siblings.

“Cousin Zhong is my new idol! He just became a four star Warrior not long ago! How does he do it?” The young ones too gained respect for him,

and they were looking at their big cousin standing in the middle of the arena imitating his moves.

“Get out of the way now!” Ye Zhong muttered and kicked the unconscious Du Xian Hong in the air, towards the Du camp’s direction.

“Well fought!”

Feeling humiliated, Du Yuan Ming’s face was black. He let out a low hum and flicked his long sleeves out to catch his grandson which was empowered with Qi to make it supportive like a cushion. He wrapped his sleeve around the limp body then placed it next to where the medics were waiting.

“Han Yue, looks like they’ve gotten themselves a five star Warrior. What do you say about playing with him a bit before killing him?” He couldn’t look at the bloody mess which happened to be his grandson for more than a second. Revenge was the only thing in his head, and his voice was slow, low, and cruel when he spoke to Du Han Yue.

He never thought he would have to send Du Han Yue out to get his hands dirty as the plan was to let Du Xian Hong and other five star Warriors finish the deed until Ye Zhong displayed his capabilities. “Han Yue, respect your opponent and give it your all. If anything happens dad has your back?” He stared at Ye Zhong and said with the intention to kill.

“Understood!”

Du Han Yue nodded. He squinted his eyes in the direction of Ye Zhong, planning how to knock him out cold. He shifted his balance to his forefeet, bent his knees then launched himself high up in the air, towards the arena.

The Ye family all had worrying faces as Du Han Yue’s shadow entered the ring, the ones that had seen him fight were more anxious than the others who had not. The six star Warrior’s unique ruthless fighting style etched a bloody image on the minds of whoever witnessed him in action.

Ye Zhong couldn’t win with power and speed, the cultivation difference was too much; nor did the Ye family have an advantage when it came to

stance variety because the Du family had a big library of them. The odds were stacked up against Ye Zhong...

“Little Zhong...” Ye Hai has seen Du Han Yue fight, there was no reason for him not to be worried. At this point it was fair to say the Ye family and the Du family had fallen out completely. It would not be a surprise if the Du family wanted Ye Zhong badly injured, or dead to gain some face after Ye Zhong humiliated them.

“Cousin Zhong, Please protect yourself!”

It's not they didn't have faith in Ye Zhong, the old and the young Ye's were worried because they were aware of Du Han Yue's status as one of the top five youngsters in Green Moon City. They knew that he had real talent to back up the name he made for himself.

The air froze in and around the arena. Ye Zhong was in a long light green robe and Du Han Yue in white. Standing ten meters away from each other exchanging looks, both imagining ways to overpower his opponent.

All eyes were on these two. This was the matchup everyone was here to watch. Talents speak for themselves and there were two of them standing off right here, right now; early on the crowd learned what the stake was during the patriarchs' verbal exchange. It wasn't just any fight. The clash of these two geniuses will affect future affairs in Green Moon City and the result of this fight would be as interesting as the fight itself for those who were not present.

“Ye Zhong being a five star Warrior has little effect on the outcome of this fight. Even if he breaks through to six star here and now in front of us, he still won't be able to beat Han Yue, and that's a big and impossible if!” The talkative General Zhou couldn't bare the silence. He smiled as he turned his head towards the two who sat next to him.

“I don't think anyone who has less than a seven star cultivation will be able to challenge Du Han Yue... Good luck finding someone like that in Green Moon City! Or in the Ye family in this case! Hahaha!” President Dong agreeably nodded.

Du Han Tue came to fame because of a fight six months ago where he

beat not one, not two, but three six star Warriors... People have since kept an eye on his development.

“What’s your name again? Ye Zhong right?” Du Yue Ming was getting into the mood to fight. He was feeling pretty confident after hearing praises from the audience’s chatter and the sardonic smile on his pale face reflected just that.

“You guessed it!” Ye Zhong was on the alert. A fight with someone stronger than himself can be over in a matter of seconds. Although he is now a five star Warrior and has mastered a low level Myst stance, he could not reveal the stance before the right moment; the stance has to connect and finish the fight, using it defensively would not help him win the fight against this six star Warrior who stood before him.

“So, I was watching your fight. I counted seventy-eight punches and sixteen kicks. I am here to collect the debt!”

“I will punch you seventy-eight times and kick you sixteen times. I will keep count and won’t stop before we’re even, if it means punching and kicking your corpse, so be it!” Du Han Yue laughed and made the first move. He moved his right foot forward, his white robe and shoulder length hair were flowing in the wind giving off the bloodthirsty aura of a wild beast as he got into a half crouch position.

“You sure talk a lot!” Ye Zhong too moved his right foot forward, dust spread out in a rippling motion when he stomped the ground to show off his strength.

“I will see how long you can stay on your feet!” Du Han Yue said with an impassive expression. He quickly channeled his will-force and Qi, his finger were moving fast, drawing eighty-three runes in no time.

The screen of runes veiled Du Han Yue therefore Ye Zhong lost clear sight of him. There were some movements behind the veil but it was blurry.

“Swoosh! Swoosh Swoosh!”

The veil was transparent on Du Han Yue’s side and he could evaluate

where Ye Zhong's weak spots were, then he injected more Qi into the rune sequence, transforming it into a blood red ancient looking blade.

‘Peak high level Spirit stance, Phantom Ichor Blade!’

Known for its brutal force; this stance was one of the Du family's most famous weapons.

Du Yue Ming then pointed his finger at one of the weak spots, the phantom blade vibrated and flew towards Ye Zhong's heart, leaving a crimson trail in the air.

The phantom blade was sharper and more powerful than any mortal blade and it left a tiny ravine wherever it flew.

Ye Zhong knew there was no way to parry this attack and that he was dead if he took it head on. Thus he immediately drew a string of runes and stepped on the wave's crest and disappeared in a flash. The blade missed him by about three meters.

He knew Spindrift Steps would now be very useful thanks to Ye Wei. If Ye Wei didn't refine this stance with him, the fight would have been over already.

Chapter 33: Forbidden Swords

“What a dodge, little Zhong’s speed is incredible! It’s great he broke through to five star level, the speed just saved his life!” Ye Zheng Qing was amazed and soon realised that Ye Zhong’s Spindrift Steps was a bit different to the advanced high level Spirit stance he learned as a teenager. He was positive because he had been teaching this stance for decades since he first started training youngsters in the Ye family.

‘Could this be!?’ He stated, as it became more obvious.

‘His Spindrift Step became a peak high level Spirit stance! Did little Wei do this?’ Remembering what Ye Zhong said earlier about Ye Wei’s soul sensibility and putting two and two together was easy, but believing it was another thing altogether. The Ye Patriarch appeared calm, but he was more excited than anyone in the entire arena. ‘Will the Ye family really have a Runemaster? God bless us!’

“How many secrets are those two keeping from us?” Ye Hai looked at Ye Yi, both were pleasantly surprised and shook their heads in frustration. The brothers, themselves, hid things from the patriarch when they were Zhong and Wei’s age, but they didn’t know until now how it felt being on the other end of such secrecy. The brothers felt that they do not at all understand their growing children anymore.

“Only three out of sixteen of our family’s high level Spirit stances are at the peak stage. Now with Spindrift Steps we have four!”

“Its practicality and value just doubled. We need to ask Ye Zhong to tell us what rune they changed!” Ye Zhong’s aunt and uncles were amazed by his swift maneuver in the arena, and they temporarily forgot about the dire situation they were in.

The Ye family was awed and shocked whereas the Du family was aggravated and stunned. The Du family carried out a thorough investigation of the Ye family. The Du Patriarch was not happy that these two important details were not described in the report regarding Ye Zhong’s cultivation and stances.

“What is this report? Does Ye Zhong look like a four star Warrior and does his Spindrift Step looks like an advanced high level Spirit stance to anyone here? We all make mistakes, but two inaccurate pieces of information on the same person? I cannot accept this!”

“Who was investigating the Ye family?” Du Yuan Ming questioned as he was extremely dissatisfied. The family members were distressed by the patriarch’s gloomy face as he scanned around him looking for whoever was responsible.

“Big brother... I was responsible for the reports!” The patriarch’s third eldest brother Du Yuan Yan stepped forward. He was as frustrated as anyone else in the Du family if not more. He had verified every little detail himself and could not understand the inconsistency in the report.

“I expect precise explanations for this mistake!” Du Yuan Ming frowned at his brother.

“Patriarch, surely it doesn’t matter that his Spindrift Step is at the advanced level or peak level? Jumping around very quickly is not going to win him the fight against Han Yue.” Dong Ho laughed as he spoke.

“It’s just a peak level Spirit stance, even if this kid brought out a forbidden stance it wouldn’t affect anything. The difference in their cultivation is too vast; these tricks won’t get him anywhere!” General Zhou sneered.

The two were very confident about Du Han Yue’s cultivation over Ye Zhong’s. He was one of the best six star Warriors there were. Du Han Yue knew he was destined to win.

“Looks like Han Yue is bit angry though?” There was a smile on Dong He’s chubby face, and he could tell the fight was going to get interesting. He squinted his eyes and looked into the arena. The six star Warrior did a look a bit frustrated by his speedy opponent.

There was a cold glimmer in Du Han Yue’s eyes, and he said in a low voice: “Dodge? Can you dodge this with just your fancy peak high level Spirit stance?”

His face suddenly looked very serious then he transferred will-force to his fingers. He focused on getting a good aim at Ye Zhong who was quick due to the wave on his feet.

He wiggled his fingers and the phantom blade started transforming, it vibrated vigorously then split into four. Which were now homing in on Ye Zhong from all directions.

There was a blade above, below, left, and right of Ye Zhong, dodging was no longer an option.

“In this case...” Ye Zhong evaluated his situation. His eyes brightened up, Qi and will-force came pouring out as he came up with an idea. He was so familiar with this stance, the eight-one runes were almost engraved into Ye Zhong’s mind from his training. Therefore it took him less than a second to finish drawing the sequence.

The runes lit up around his body, emitting a crystal clear glow as they intertwined into three ancient double edged spirit swords. Each of the swords were engraved on their fullers with mysterious runes, giving off an desolate aura.

“High level forbidden Spirit stance, Triple Plunder Sword!”

Ye Wei and Ye Zhong refined three stances in total: Spindrift Step, Triple Plunder Sword, and White Tiger’s Assault. They all became more powerful, but the refinement was a bit different with Triple Plunder Sword. Not only did Ye Wei made it more powerful, but he also reduced the recoil so it would not hurt the user as much as other forbidden stances would.

Performing it once or twice was fine, but the stance might still harm whoever used it too often.

Now that Du Han Yue sealed all the escape routes, retaliation was Ye Zhong’s only way out!

Ye Zhong trod on the dusty ground while pointing his fingers at the four phantom blades. What followed was a razor sharp pressure wave, and his spirit swords flew out in a flash towards the blood red phantom blades.

The three spirit swords were on a course to collide with the four phantom blades. They too carved marks into the ground on their path as if their shadows had a cutting edge.

“Clang!”

Forbidden technique was more than just a title; the spirit swords were very powerful. The four phantom blades were repulsed by two spirit swords as the last sword flew straight at Du Han Yue.

“Forbidden stance!”

It became apparent to Du Yue Ming and the spectators that Triple Plunder Sword was a forbidden stance when they saw that just one sword was powerful enough to block two peak high level phantom blades. Both the Ye and Du family could not hide how surprised they were as both had the same facial expression.

A Ye who practised forbidden stances! It was shocking news to both families not only because of the strength of these techniques, but also due to the dangers it brings. Furthermore, Ye Zhong was the strongest youngster with a bright future ahead of him. It made little sense that he should use a forbidden stance given their reputation of having a life threatening recoil.

Even though Du Han Yue was a six star Warrior, his cultivation advantage didn't play a big part in this Mystic stance showdown. His crimson phantom blades could not compete with the forbidden swords, therefore they were destroyed and turned into red smoke upon impact.

However the Qi and will-force of a six star Warrior was on another level. Although Du Han Yue's stance was a level lower, Ye Zhong's two spirit blades were shattered by the phantom blades that were made from denser Qi.

The clash of Qi swords and blades turned into a screen of dust and smoke. From the smokescreen came Ye Zhong's last spirit sword. It flew towards Du Han Yue with frightening, penetrating momentum.

It tore through the air travelling at a furious speed while creating an

explosive, and piercing whistling sound. It didn't matter if Du Han Yue had a cultivation advantage, the speed of the forbidden sword made it undodgeable.

“Get him!” Ye Zhong said with wide open eyes and the intention to kill..

Chapter 34: Butterfly Effect

Ever since the duel was arranged the odds were stacked heavily against Ye Zhong in this five star versus six star Warrior death-match. Even his own family did not have high expectations of him leaving the arena as the victor; they just wanted him to come out alive. But after seeing Ye Zhong performing a forbidden stance, as the spirit sword closes in on Du Han Yue, they felt victory was near.

If Ye Zhong beat Du Han Yue here not only will the the Du family give up on their ancestral land at North Hill Bay they would also stop sabotaging the Ye family's businesses.

Exceeding the Ye family's wildest imagination, Triple Plunder Sword had now become a forbidden stance and it might just help them bury their problems!

The audiences' eyes were popping out and they could not look away. They were at the edge of their seats as they witnessing a possible upset. The details of the last fight where a lower ranked cultivator beat a higher ranked opponent was so monumental that it would be recorded in the history books of Green Moon City! This rare achievement will put Ye Zhong's name in the hall of fame.

"Forbidden stance! Damn it! Since when do the Ye's have one of those in their arsenal!?" The whole Du camp was worried except three people who were keeping their cool and looked undaunted.

The Du Patriarch, President Dong, and General Zhou were impressed but they knew Du Han Yue would not go down that easily; the six star Warrior had many ways to deal with this situation!

For Ye Zhong using a forbidden stances was a way to challenge and maybe even topple a six star Warrior, but Du Han Yue was anything but ordinary. Without amazing defense, this genius couldn't have beaten three six star Warriors single-handedly.

Being a pretty talented fighter himself, even when he was a level below six star, Ye Zhong should be able to defeat many six star Warriors, but he

was about to find out just how versatile this opponent was.

“High level Spirit stance, Ivy Armor!”

“High level Spirit stance, Iron Frame!”

The spirit sword was a sizeable threat that concerned Du Han Yue. It was the first time in a long while he looked worried. But he wasn't startled as he knew exactly how to respond. His will-force came pouring out and with Qi he drew rune after rune which became the two high level Spirit stances.

The large amount of twinkling runes were floating around the duelists. Behind the screen of shining shapes, ivy armor started materializing on Du Han Yue's body. Underneath the armor his skin gained a metallic luster and all of a sudden his flesh and skin become hard as steel.

Du Han Yue's lightning reflexes allowed him to react moments before the spirit sword connected, and he finished the two stances in less than a second! The spirit sword did not wait as it tore through the newly formed armor.

“Pop!”

Ye Zhong's spirit sword pierced right through, but the armor did slow its momentum. When the sword reached Du Han Yue's skin it was weakened by roughly thirty percent.

“Clang!”

The spirit sword threw sparks as it grazed the glowing skin on Du Han Yue's cheek. The sharp grinding echoed in the arena.

The sword was deflected as if it crashed into a solid block of steel!

The spirit sword shattered after leaving a shallow red trail. “A forbidden stance... Good. Welldone!” Fresh blood ran down Du Han Yue's face as he slowly raised his hand and wiped it off. He spoke in an intriguingly calm tone. His stare remained sharp and it was apparent that he was not emotionally affected by Ye Zhong's ferocious onslaught.

The wicked spirit sword had the intent to kill, but it did next to nothing

to Du Han Yue!

“I am proud of you. Seem the Ye family has more than just history after all! But you’re not special! We know forbidden stances too!” Du Han Yue said with a straight face, looking right into Ye Zhong’s eyes. It sounded like he didn’t really care about his opponent’s impressive forbidden technique. He leisurely raised his fingers, will-force was still lingering on them as he skillfully moved his Qi from his dantian to his hands.

With his fingers Du Han Yue transformed his Qi into runes. He drew every rune with great intensity and there was burst of energy for every rune he finished. The energy waves were warm and pressuring.

“Forbidden stance, Butterfly Inferno!” There was an abnormal red flush to his face as he finished the twinkling sequence. The hundred and thirty-six runes were formed within the blink of an eye.

“Buzz!”

Qi flowed vigorously within the sequence of runes then it metamorphosed into a swarm of clear winged butterflies which burned brightly.

Flapping wings from the swarm of butterflies stirred up a blistering tornado. Hundreds of raging butterflies rushed towards Ye Zhong.

Each burning butterfly had the wingspan of only three inches, but their presence exceeded their size! The faces of the Ye family turned pale when they saw the enormous swarm of burning butterflies fill the arena.

“Butterfly Inferno stance! The Du family lets their kids practice forbidden techniques?!” Ye Zheng Qing’s face went pale. Ye Zhong’s performance was way better than the patriarch’s expectations and that gave him a glimmer of hope which had just been shattered by Du Han Yue using a forbidden technique.

Being one of the Big Three, it was natural that Du family had access to forbidden stances, but they were actually against younger family members, especially geniuses like Du Han Yue, using such techniques because of the repercussions they could cause and their harmful side-

effects.

Using these dangerous stances can shake one's foundation therefore it is usually not worth the risk. When Du Han Yue and Ye Zhong showed off their double-edged techniques their families were far from pleased!

"Butterfly Inferno... Is that really necessary? Han Yue seems to be a bit too impulsive. It's just Ye Zhong, there is no need to use a forbidden technique surely? He's just a five star Warrior! Yes, he knows a forbidden stance, but Han Yue still has the will-force and Qi advantage!"

"Just wait until Ye Zhong uses up his Qi. A fatigued opponent is an easy opponent that is an obvious and risk-free way to win right?" Seeing Du Han Yue getting carried away, General Zhou and President Dong both shook their heads in disappointment thinking he was too young and hot-headed to judge the situation.

Du Yuan Ming was not angry, but he too was disappointed. The most talented youngster basically just wasted a few months worth of training. It was very possible for Du Han Yue to reach the condensed prime Warrior level before he turned thirty. Ye Zhong was not a worthy opponent, definitely not worth wasting his son's precious' future prospects.

"Idiot! Ye Zhong is just a five star Warrior of course he is going to give everything he has including forbidden stances! He's willing to risk everything for honor and to save his ancestral land! Why the hell would you use a forbidden technique just to match him? You could be looking at breaking through to the seven star level in six months! The recoil is going to set you back so much and now you won't be able to breakthrough for another year!" These were the words of a mysterious teenager who stood amongst the Du camp. He shook his head with disdain when he saw Ye Zhong and Du Han Yue performing forbidden stances.

A few of the Du family's talented youngsters frowned when they heard the mysterious youth's rant, but they didn't dare verbalise their disagreement.

They didn't know exactly who he was, but they knew he was related to

Lu Feng, and that he was an eighteen year old seven star Warrior! It's hard to imagine but they do exist. The Du family wouldn't gain anything if they angered such a person.

“What!? Du Han Yue knows forbidden techniques too! This is the last nail in the coffin for Ye Zhong for sure his opponents cultivation advantage and stances are too much for him to handle!”

“The Ye family is done for!” Seeing the butterflies burying Ye Zhong the audience started to speculate again.

Ye Zhong impressed many by fighting valiantly, but it looked to the audience like the fairytale was coming to an end the moment they saw Du Han Yue performing a forbidden stance.

The butterflies swarmed towards Ye Zhong like a rain of burning arrows. They were closing in on Ye Zhong fast, ready to explode.

“Boom!”

Red hot waves exploded on Ye Zhong. He found himself bathing in a tornado of burning blades, his clothes and skin were ripped and burnt by the stance. His clothes became rags and his skin turned black and green from bruises and burns. It was looking grim for him.

Chapter 35: Mystic Tiger

In no time, Ye Zhong's hair and eyebrows were burnt. His face became worryingly pale, and he spat out blood due to internal injuries. Despite being hit hard though, he did not shake, nor did Ye Zhong take his eyes off Du Han Yue. He was staring at the six star Warrior with a determined look through the hundreds of burning butterflies.

How was Ye Zhong suppose to defend himself against his rival's forbidden stance with his cultivation deficit?

"Ye Zhong, just throw in the towel! The plot of ancestral land by North Hill Bay means nothing if there is nobody to inherit it!" Seeing Ye Zhong struggling, the patriarch's heart dropped. He yelled and tried to interrupt the fight because he could feel Du Han Yue's killing intent.

Ye Zhong's display of exceptional strength and talent was more than anyone had expected. But Du Han Yue was an obstacle on a different level. With a forbidden stance in his arsenal, the elite six star Warrior from the Du family was too much for Ye Zhong's five star Warrior cultivation to handle.

The Ye family had lost. The script for this duel's finale had been written!

Although inheritance is one of the main priorities for the Ye family, it was not quite as important as the young ones' lives.

The plot of land at North Hill Bay didn't mean as much as Ye Zhong's well-being did to the patriarch. He was only twenty-two and judging by his progress, the five star Warrior had great chance of becoming a condensed prime Warrior if he was given enough time. The patriarch was ready to trade his family's pride for his grandson's future. The eldest grandson who had the potential to become stronger than he was.

With Ye Zhong and Ye Wei as the foundation, Ye Zheng Qing was certain the Ye family could rebuild and become strong again, even if they were to lose the duel. One will always win and lose in life, sometimes it's more important to protect the future than to be obsessed with pride and

honor.

“Ye Zhong, surrender now!”

“It’s not worth it big cousin!”

Ye Zhong’s green robe was now blood-soaked, partially burnt black, and in shreds. Looking at the burnt and bloody man, Ye Hai, Ye Yi, Ye Jing Jing, and the Ye youngsters showed immense worry in their eyes as they shouted desperately.

“Du Yuan Ming, I am speaking for my family! We surrender! Make Du Han Yue stop fighting!” Ye Zheng Qing shouted towards where the Du Patriarch sat.

“This fight is not really mine but the young ones’ business. The moment they stepped into the arena we have no rights to interfere, their lives are their own responsibilities. I didn’t call a stop to the fight when our Du Yuan Hong nearly lost his life, did I?” Du Yuan Ming laughed wryly. He wore a cold smile on his face while casually glancing at the desperate Ye Patriarch.

“You!” Ye Zheng Qing was clouded by anger and didn’t know what to say. Du Xian Hong started the torture earlier and it was fair for Ye Zhong to take revenge. It frustrated him greatly because he was willing to give up the ancestral land, but the Du patriarch was still cold and refused to be reasonable! ‘What more do you want!?’ He asked in his mind.

Butterfly Inferno was a forbidden stance, and now that it was performed by a six star Warrior its destructiveness was in a completely different realm! If it was not stopped Ye Zhong will have zero chance of surviving; he will be engulfed and incinerated!

“This is our premises!” Ye Zheng Qing looked towards Ye Zhong who was now in grave danger. He could not wait any longer. The Ye Patriarch took a step forward, and his force had the presence of the great mountains, he stirred up breezes and the air around him started rippling.

At the Ye camp, the one star condensed prime Warrior Ye Hai, the three seven star Warriors Ye Han, Ye Yi, and Ye Yu, and the seven star Warrior

Ye Jing Jing were all releasing their Qi readying for a brawl to save Ye Zhong.

How could they just sit back and watch?

“What? Do you lot want to break the rules? Don’t any of you dare come a step closer to the arena!” Du Yuan Ming said as he was staring off with the Ye family. Walking forward he channeled his energy emitting an invisible wave from the tip of his foot.

“Ye Patriarch, I, Zhou Wu, am the judge of this duel. What do you think you’re doing? And who do you think I am? The City Lord will hear about this!”

Seven Star condensed prime Warrior General Zhou Wu too took a heavy step forward. He stood side by side with Du Patriarch and gave a cold glare to the Ye camp.

“Ye Zheng Qing don’t make stupid mistakes!” The sneering Ling He Merchant Guild’s president Dong Ho stood up by his allies as well.

Du Yuan Ming and general Zhou were both seven star condensed prime Warrior whereas Dong Ho was a five star condensed prime Warrior. The energy from these three together was enough to drown out the Ye camp’s despite their greatest efforts.

The Ye family only had two condensed prime Warriors, and they were three star and one star level. There was no chance for them to contend against the Du camp.

The challengers did not plan to go easy on the Ye family from the start. If the Ye Patriarch and his kin decide to interfere with what was happening in the arena then it would be the perfect excuse for the Du’s to wipe them out!

“Du Yuan Ming, if anything happens to Ye Zhong I will fight you to my last breath!” Ye Zheng Qing’s silver hair framed his straight, furious face. The energy he was releasing made his hair stand up, the patriarch resemble an angry lion.

“To your last breath?” Du Yuan Ming sneered with disdain. “We are one

of the Big Three. There are six condensed prime Warriors compared to your family's two! What does your decaying family have to challenge us with? That is some overconfidence!"

"Looks like the Du family wants to go in for the kill. What a shame for the Ye family... This Ye Zhong stood his ground pretty well. His mastery over that forbidden technique and him being a five star Warrior will be wasted. It's a shame personalities like this will fall at such young age."

"Ye Zhong looked like he had a shot at breaking through to the condensed prime level before he turned thirty. It's unfortunate that his family made powerful enemies who don't really mind taking his life just for face. It is too late for the Ye family to do anything now, isn't it?"

"Can't the Ye family see? Do they still think they are the Ye family?"

"A few centuries ago the Ye's were something. They were undoubtedly the strongest family in Green Moon City, but now... Haha, how much could they achieve by fighting to their last breath?"

Witnessing the two camps' confrontation and the swarm of butterflies slowly overwhelming Ye Zhong, the Ye family was ridiculed by some members of the audience while the others were shaking their heads and sighing about their misfortune.

"Son of a bitch! I am going to smash your heads in!" Ye Jing Jing's temper was bad, and seeing Ye Zhong's end closing in she could no longer just sit and watch. Screw the situation, screw the rules, she was going in no matter what!

"Buzz!"

A thin mist of Qi solidified on Ye Jing Jing's skin forming a thin but sturdy layer of primal feathers.

"Roar!"

Just as Ye Jing Jing was about to enter the arena and make a move, a deep, powerful roar filled the arena.

The tiger's roar was fearsome and magnificent, it reached up to the

clouds in the blue summer sky!

Ye Zheng Qing, Du Yuan Ming, Zhou Wu, and Dong He were all shaken by the noise. They immediately turn their heads in fear toward the source of the uproar.

Everyone's sight met at the place where a three meter long spectral white tiger emerged from within the swarm of burning butterflies. This beast was horned. Its well defined silver white hair flowed gracefully in the wind.

The tiger's eyes opened wide, permeating a domineering aura. The king of beasts' presence was felt and feared by every single one of the burning butterflies!

“Roar! Roar! Roar!”

The horned white tiger looked up to the sky and cried as three consecutive deafening roars exploded the ears of everyone like thunder. The whole arena shook vigorously and the ground started to crack!

Members of the audience who had less than a five star Warrior cultivation covered their ears and cried out in pain. Some of the ones who had yet to reach the Warrior level were knocked unconscious from the impact.

Back in the arena, Du Han Yue was catching his breath still trying to recover from performing a forbidden stance. Stunned by the horned tiger's roar, his face was as pale as chalk from fatigue and fear, and his legs were shaky. The noise penetrated his eardrums and dazed him. He lost his balance, and staggered backwards for six steps. His organs were shaken by the vibration and were aching.

“A blazing horned tiger!” Ye Zheng Qing, Ye Hai, and others in the Ye camp were showing a sense of unshakable amazement from their facial expressions when they saw the horned white tiger.

“Ye Zhong's White Tiger's Assault is more powerful than a high level Stance, it's a Myst stance!”

“Myst stance! Our family now has another Myst stance!” The Ye's could

not suppress the thrills and euphoria and screamed out almost incoherently.

Myst stances were normally exclusive to people who were condensed prime Warriors, or stronger. It was a shock to everyone that Ye Zhong had such power at his command.

Chapter 36: The Rise To Fame

“This is White Tiger’s Assault, it is suppose to be strongest of the sixteen high level Spirit stances. If I remember right it is only a peak high level Spirit stance! How come it has the power of a Myst stance!?”

“How can a five star Warrior possess such overwhelming power!?”

A portion of the audience was from martial families, and although the Ye family was not as big as they use to be, they still remembered what kind of firepower the once great Ye’s possessed. They were more shocked than others by this incarnation of the tiger because they knew the Ye family’s stances and the White Tiger’s Assault was suppose to be one of their sixteen high level Spirit stances.

“Ye Zhong isn’t a condensed prime Warrior but he performed a Myst stance! That means he refined and upgraded the White Tiger’s Assault himself?!”

To refine a stance takes a lot of effort, but to increase its rank is a feat; a task that cannot be completed by a Warrior on his own. People were starting suspect the involvement of a Runemaster in Ye Zhong’s training. ‘It can’t be! The Ye family has a Runemaster behind them?’

‘He must have trained and upgraded all his stances with a Runemaster’s aid. That is the only explanation to his sudden breakthrough in such a short time! He was still a four star Warrior three days ago!’

“Maybe the Ye’s really have some connections with Master Yi?” Du Yuan Ming was stunned seeing Ye Zhong bring out the White Tiger’s Assault as a Myst stance. His mind wandered as he tried to reevaluate the situation.

Members of the audience who were still conscious were starting to wonder how could Ye family retaliate this hard. Even general Zhou and president Dong were starting to frown, they might be digging themselves into a sticky situation if there was a Runemaster behind the the Ye’s.

Obviously nobody outside the Ye family would ever imagine that White

Tiger's Assault was upgraded by a thirteen year old South Star Academy junior class student, not even if the Ye family admitted it was done by one. Ye Wei was completely nobody for most people.

To elevate a stance through the barrier between Spirit and Myst level was difficult even for some qualified Runemasters, not to mention that Ye Wei was a junior who had never been taught anything about modifying stances.

"This White Tiger's Assault, was it refined by Ye Wei too? But how is that possible? Refining it would take time even for Runemasters who are qualified for the job!" Ye Zheng Qing was struggling to make sense out of the situation.

While outsiders were under the impression that the Ye family was hiding a Runemaster somewhere in their dungeons, the Ye camp knew in their hearts that there was no Runemaster behind them.

Ye Wei was the only person in the family who had the talent it took to become a Runemaster.

"Han Yue, come back!" After the shock, Du Yuan Ming ordered a retreat with his deep, desperate voice. Du Han Yue was pale and weak, there was little chance for him to handle a Myst stance, especially in his current state.

Although Ye Zhong was only a five star Warrior and his Myst stance was obviously not, currently, at its full potential but the sheer power of the stance could not be stopped by anyone below a seven star Warrior.

The tables had turned on the Du family who were now panicking. They were aware that Du Han Yue would be destroyed by the Myst stance. But it was too late for them to do anything!

"I need to get out of this!" Du Han Yue's senses told him to retreat as the overwhelming force of the White Tiger's Assault closed in. He was hoping the butterflies would slow the tiger down, but the big cat just powered through as if they were not there. Its unstoppable momentum was in Du Han Yue's face in no time.

Overwhelmed by fear, Du Han Yue turned around and clumsily sprinted towards the arena entrance. He ran for his life!

“You think you can get away! Don’t you?” Ye Zhong’s blood soaked clothes were in pieces. His eyes were cold and stared at Du Han Yue like a bloodthirsty tiger. He wanted to return the pain he was given.

“Argh!” As Ye Zhong finished his sentence, the horned white tiger cried. Its deafening roar stunned the target. It then raised its gigantic paw up high and pounced.

The tiger’s paw struck towards Du Han Yue’s back but a large swarm of butterflies surrounding Du Han Yue was getting in the way.

“Bang!”

Accompanied by a loud noise, caused by the impact, the white tiger’s paw scattered layers and layers of butterflies, powering through the resistance and landing on Du Han Yue’s back. His back immediately bend and deformed. The massive force connected against Du Han Yue and forced him onto floor of the arena.

“Crack!”

His nose shattered when his face hit the ground. Spiderweb cracks appeared on the arena’s foundation made of greenstone.

Du Han Yue squealed like an animal in a slaughterhouse. He was bleeding out of his crooked nostrils.

“I will end you!” Du Han Yue stared at Ye Zhong ferociously from the ground, freaking out as he screamed. He was missing a front tooth, and crawling on the ground like a madman. He was furious. The strongest youngster in the Du family had never lost a fight, and now a five star Warrior completely overpowered him!

Du Han Yue ignored his injuries, and forced more Qi out of his dantian. The huge swarm of burning butterflies reformed and regrouped then flew towards the white tiger.

“Bang! Bang! Bang!”

Waves after waves of burning butterflies exploded on the white tiger. Ye Zhong grunted and coughed up a lot of blood. Despite being on the ground and in a bad position the six star Warrior's counter attack was fierce.

"You want to end me? You are not capable of that I'm afraid!" The white tiger soared into the air again. Ye Zhong grunted and ignored the swarm pushing forward with heavy steps that carried the momentum of a landslide.

Ye Zhong's fearsome force dove from the sky, keeping Du Han Yue on the ground.

"Bang!"

Du Han Yue's face collided onto the arena grounds again, and blood gushed out of his head. He squealed even louder than before, and the scene gave the audience goosebumps.

"Our family has kept good traditions and honor for generations, you opportunistic, greedy, disrespectful garbage have no rights to get our land!" Ye Zhong said in a cold, heavy tone, the force he used increasing after each word he spoke. The pressure waves clamped Du Han Yue onto the floor.

Du Han Yue was drowning in helplessness under the immense pressure that held him down. His heart was trembling out of fear. He struggled and shook his body, but his attempts to free himself were denied by waves of intensifying force from Ye Zhong. He was completely stuck and there was no way of getting out of the crack on the ground that Ye Zhong made using him as a pick.

There were no unbroken bones or uninjured organs in Du Han Yue's body. If he was not a six star Warrior with a formidable amount of Qi protecting his body, his organs would have been torn apart and he would have died.

Du Han Yue was unresigned. 'How? Why can he use a Myst stance? He's just a five star Warrior...' He coughed up a mouthful of blood and passed out before he could finish his thought.

Feeling that Du Han Yue was done for, Ye Zhong kicked his unconscious opponent out of the arena. After using all his energy on White Tiger's Assault and eating its recoil, although he won, his face was completely white and he was wobbling. It took great effort for him to stay on his feet.

"I cannot fall! I have to stay on my feet. For my family!" Ye Zhong was struggling to keep just his eyes open and stay conscious.

Du Han Yue was defeated?

Everyone was shocked by what they just witnessed. Ye Zhong was barely standing up but he was the victor! It took them a while to digest this information.

"A five star Warrior defeated a forbidden stance performed by a six star Warrior!"

"There must be a Runemaster behind this! Who is it?" The audience was ecstatic, they were energized by the possible drama and how today's events might unfold!

With this bloody battle, Ye Zhong had now replaced Du Han Yue as one of the top five youngsters in Green Moon City!

Chapter 37: Mysterious Youth

If the Ye family really had a Runemaster behind them then overrunning them was not longer as carefree and simple as the Du family initially planned!

Look at the Ye family! They were not as washed-up as everyone imagined. The valiant resistance they showed inspired hundreds at the arena.

Du Yuan Ming looked at Du Han Yue, who was lying motionlessly on the ground, then he shifted his focus to the arena at the staggering Ye Zhong with a murderous glare.

“Du Patriarch, a Warrior who can perform Myst stance... This is fishy!” Dong He spoke up, he was feeling a bit difficult regarding the situation. He closed his eyes then continued calculating. ‘If a Runemaster gets involved I should still be fine. I did not start this dispute. I’m not going to get too involved therefore I can be blameless if this goes south.’

Du Yuan Ming’s face remained straight, and not a word has left his mouth.

“Little Zhong won, our five star Warrior defeated a six star opponent. God bless our family name!” Ye Zheng Qing’s frown loosened, and his aged face once again displayed bottomless delight.

‘None of us in the older generation had the potential little Zhong has, and little Wei clearly has the potential to become a Runemaster. In twenty years nobody will be able to mess with the Ye family!’

Ye Hai’s hands were shaking. He could not repress his emotions the moment he knew the fight was over. Not only was his son alive, he even won!

“Big brother, you have a great son!” Ye Hai’s siblings all gratefully looked at him with genuine smiles on their faces.

Ye Zhong accomplished a great mission; he defended the Ye family!

“Little brother thank you! We have to thank little Wei too!” Ye Hai

thankfully patted Ye Yi's shoulders. If it wasn't for the new White Tiger's Assault Ye Zhong's life would have been at the Du family's mercy! Ye Wei contributed the most to him winning this fight!

Hearing Ye Hai's little speech, Ye Yi became emotional and his eyes were wet. Ye Wei was no longer a sore spot in his heart. Set aside that it was thought to be impossible for him to reach the Warrior level with his red sentient, if the fight did not just end the way it did then Ye Wei would not be able to survive without the protection of their family's roof.

Ye Yi was still trying to let the news regarding Ye Wei's talent settle. The power to change the Ye family's future now lay in his son's hands. He could not be any prouder.

There is no reason to worry about Ye Wei anymore, he could finally let go of the burden in his mind.

Meanwhile at the Du camp, the patriarch, general, and president were having an unprecedented moment of complete silence.

Du Han Yue was not their main concern. He was gravely injured but as long as he was breathing, the Du family's wealth would fund his recovery. The problem at hand was deciding what their next step would be because of the mystery around Ye Zhong's breakthrough and Myst stance. They had to figure out whether there was a Runemaster behind the Ye family and if so, who it was.

'Could it really be Master Yi?' Du Yuan Ming frowned while stuck in deep thought. The Ye family did mention his name.

"Upgrading a Spirit stance to a Myst stance is no easy task. I'm afraid master Yi is the only person in Green Moon City who's capable doing it!" General Zhou proposed the hypothesis seriously. He was someone that used brute strength, but also one who could think clearly. He was aware that if master Yi was one of Ye family's allies then he was not willing nor could he afford to step foot in this mess.

Out of the three Runemaster in Green Moon City, Master Yi was indisputably the strongest. He was a ten star Runemaster. Just one step away from becoming a Legendary Grand-Runemaster!

The amount of Grand-Runemaster in the dynasty could be counted on one hand. Their supreme existence was unchallenged. In remote cities like Green Moon personalities like Master Yi were not to be messed with, and even the City Lord, himself, would think twice before saying anything to him.

General Zhou and Dong Ho looked into each other's eyes and exchanged a solemn, careful expression.

"This is impossible! If the Ye family was that close to Master Yi then why isn't the Runemaster at the arena to spectate?" The Du Patriarch could feel that Zhou Wu and Dong He's determination was softening, and he desperately attempted to rally his camp.

For the Ye family, Zhou Wu and Dong Ho were invited by the patriarch to help complete his scheme. They were not villains in the Ye's eyes like the Du family was. If the Ye family could get past today, the Du family was going to be the target of revenge!

The Du family had already passed the point of no return! Their best option was to deliver the knockout punch to the Ye's right here and now!

Du Yuan Ming snorted and said: "The Ye family is bluffing maybe Master Yi unintentionally refined a stance for Ye Zhong when he was experimenting or something, but knowing Master Yi's hermit lifestyle, the chances of him getting involved in our dispute is zero! Why would he help the Ye family?"

Zhou Wu and Dong Ho considered the patriarch's reasoning in silence and eventually saw the logic in it.

"If we get our hands on their ancestral land at North Hill Bay and hand it to mister Lu Feng, he would most definitely be on our side! Plus, the Ye family has already stamped the contract, with the document in hand all we need to do is win the duel. At that point even if Master Yi wanted to do something about the situation, he couldn't!" Du Yuan Ming ground his teeth and said coldly, this is all or nothing!

"Brother Du, Han Yue the strongest of our youngsters has been defeated, and you only have a handful of five star Warriors at your disposal.

Although Ye Zhong has already been weakened and I don't think any of them can finish him!" Dong Ho was looking at Ye Zhong while still on his feet. And in Dong Ho's eyes he was still hiding some tricks up his burnt and bloody sleeves.

"He has a Myst stance at his command, Dong He is right this could be tricky!" General Zhou Wu said with a straight face. If Ye Zhong can perform White Tiger's Assault just once more, anyone lesser than a six star Warrior will not stand a chance! It's the last man, we can't risk it!

"Before this day came, I had a long talk with Lu Feng, and it's lucky for us he over-prepared... If a six star Warrior can't put Ye Zhong down then we will send a seven star Warrior into the arena!" Du Yuan Ming looked at the group of youngsters who stood behind him, focused on the stern looking mysterious teenager.

That young seven star Warrior was Lu Feng's friend, but his last name was not Du.

"Who of you dare face me?" Ye Zhong gathered his strength and roared. His words echoed throughout the arena as he scanned the scared faces of the youngster standing in the Du camp.

'Just one more fight. One more win until our ancestral land is safe!'

Feeling Ye Zhong's determination and seeing his fierce glance, the five star Warriors of the Du camp were hesitant and some were even trembling in fear. The image of Du Han Yue's horrifying defeat was still freshly implanted in their heads.

"Little Zhong, don't force yourself!" Seeing Ye Zhong's blood stained clothes and body, the Ye family looked very concerned. He was just a five star Warrior, although he did beat Du Xian Hong and Du Han Yue it was uncertain whether he could take on another five star Warrior the Du family would send into the arena.

"If I'm breathing, I will be fighting! I am not going to step out of this arena!" Ye Zhong ground his teeth in pain. He grunted and spoke, "Ye is my last name and I will defend our history and honor!"

Fight!

It's the only way! He had done this much and gone this far. Ye Zhong planned to defeat the last person the Du family sent out even if he was going to die of fatigue. He was one step away from saving his family from this crisis!

Meanwhile, the stern looking youngster walked through the Du camp slowly. He rolled up his sleeves as he leisurely approached the arena, not looking concerned at all.

"I admire your courage, but the party's over. You will lose now!" He calmly said to Ye Zhong while closing in on him.

Chapter 38: Seven Star Warrior

“Who is that teenager?”

The Ye family was in touch with the current affairs of Green Moon City, and had knowledge of the other families' strengths and weaknesses. They also kept track of the up-and-coming youngsters of this generation. However nobody in the Ye camp recognized this teenager's stern looking face.

Ye Zheng Qing researched the Du family, and he knew every single one of them well. His heart sank as he saw this teenager's face. The patriarch's eagle-like eyes darted to Du Yuan Ming: “Is this kid one of yours?”

Hearing Ye Zheng Qing's question, the people around the arena immediately cast their eyes onto the Du Patriarch. They were not stupid and they knew that it was entirely possible that Du family was now seeking help from outside the family in desperation!

“Of course he's one of us!” Du Yuan Ming said loudly and proudly.

“Bullshit! We know about the new generation of Du family! Who are you trying to fool?” Ye Hai couldn't hold himself back and therefore screamed in anger. He knew there were only three youngsters left on the family's roster; only three five star Warriors were left, and with Du Han Yue defeated, Ye Zhong's chances were not low. But now Du Han Yue summoned this teenager with an unknown background, everyone could smell something fishy!

Du Yuan Ming stared at Ye Hai coldly and grunted, “You have no grounds to question me. I am the Du Patriarch if I say he's with us, then he is with us. Why would I lie? We are a great branch of a well established family in the capital! There are tens of thousands of Du's within the dynasty's borders!”

It was obvious that Du Yuan Ming was giving lame excuses and lying. The audience was speculating and discussing how low, and shameful the Du family was, but no one dared stand up for the Ye family. The truth had

always been whatever the powerful insist it to be!

Everyone in the Ye camp was enraged by Du Yuan Ming's blatant lie. 'If they are not going to abide by the agreement, we are not going sit back and get bullied!'

"Gramps, even if I die, I will not accept this humiliation! I, Ye Qiu, volunteer to fight these despicable liars!" Her eyes were teary as she asked the patriarch.

"Dad, let me fight! I will defend our dignity by any means necessary!" Ye Hai said furiously.

The Du family stepped on the Ye's again and again, and the Ye's just stayed quiet and dealt with the hardship as they came. But cheating was not quite the same thing, especially when there was a written agreement.

"Stand still! Nobody said you can step foot into the arena!"

Just when that stern looking teenager was about to enter Ye Yi, the ten star Warrior, shouted with uncontrollable rage. He fiercely took a step and turned into a flash. His body now blocked the teenager.

"This is a duel between the Ye and Du families' younger generation!" Ye Yi stared coldly down at the teenager's eyes then he shouted again. "Are you one of the Du's?"

The teenager indifferently looked at Ye Yi. In his mind, if he lies and declares that he is a Du, it would be the same as betraying his ancestry which he was too proud to do, and telling the truth would not help the situation therefore he decided not to speak a word.

The teenage's silence just confirmed everyone's suspicion!

"Du Yuan Ming, this kid is not one of you! Why would you let an outsider fight for you in a family duel? Has your family run out of talent?" Ye Yi pointed at the patriarch and furiously shouted.

"General Zhou, President Dong, that teen is obviously an outsider don't tell me you think otherwise? The Du family is cheating, can't you see?" Ye Hai gazed at the two men who were suppose to be judges for this duel,

and questioned them in a furious tone.

“Well, what do you want now? This is a duel between the young ones! You are one generation too old to step in. Are you going to ignore the rules? I am the representative of the City Lord, and we do not tolerate cheaters!” General Zhou raised his voice, and not only did he evade Ye Hai’s question, he even accused the Ye family of attempting to break the rules.

“Step back! All of you! How dare you entering the arena? Do you know no shame? Do not forget you signed the contract! You are breaking the terms!” Dong He squinted his eyes and said, the pressure of Lu Feng was more realistic to him than the potential of angering a hermit therefore he chose to stand by the Du family.

“Us? We are breaking the rules? Hahaha!” Ye Zheng Qing was extremely angry, and laughed hysterically. “Our family has been through its ups and downs throughout the centuries. Even when we were going through bad times, we kept our dignity and always made the honorable decisions! We don’t make trouble, but we are not afraid to confront others when they cause trouble!”

Ye Zheng Qing was furious to the point where he was willing to sacrifice anything, even his own life, to get revenge. These three were abusing their influence, resources, and power for evil and personal gain; they are poison to society. It was obvious that they could care less about any kind of rules. This was just about ending the Ye family!

First the Du family shamelessly used the hands of outsiders in a family dispute, then Zhou Wu and Dong He ignored fairness and sportsmanship, and lastly this unreasonable accusation!

This was ridiculous!

The audience was talking amongst themselves and all their respect for the Du family had just vanished, but they didn’t have the power, nor the guts, to interfere... The Du family will eventually become a public enemy because nobody will be able to trust them!

“Du Patriarch, this is a serious matter please think before you take any

action!" Someone from the crowd could no longer hold their tongue.

Hearing that the crowd was joining in, Du Yuan Ming's face looked even more twisted than it already was, but he could not back down now. The Ye family had to be eliminated right now before they grew big again!

"You're saying he's not one of us because you have not seen him? What kind of reasoning is that? Where is your evidence?" Du Yuan Ming shouted as he kept taunting and beckoning the Ye family hoping they would become more restless and start a brawl.

Though justice was on the Ye family's side, general Zhou and president Dong were on the Du family's side and with their aid the Du camp was many times stronger than the Ye camp.

With that in mind, Du Yuan Ming wasn't worried about fighting them at all. He was just a bit worried about the Ye family's possible, self-proclaimed, relationship with Master Yi.

Du Yuan Ming was a calculating, cautious man. He was taunting non-stop because the sooner he could wipe out the Ye family the less chance there was for them to say anything wrong, or reveal possible evidence against them in the case Master Yi does come to investigate.

"Haha! Do you think the Ye family is made up of imbeciles? Let's try this!" The Ye Patriarch spoke to Du Yuan Ming with a cold grin. "You! Which branch of the Du family are you from? And where did you grow up?"

"If he is a Du I will rest my case. Win or lose, I shall accept the results, but on the contrary if he's not we will not sit here and let you do as you please!" Ye Zheng Qing looked intensely at Du Yuan Ming and said in a low voice.

Ye Zheng Qing and his family were not going to give the Du Patriarch an inch; they will not compromise.

The situation was at a stand off, and everyone knew a fight could breakout at any moment.

Ye Zheng Qing, I know it's hard for you to trust the Du family but you

trust the City Lord's judgement, right?" General Zhou took a step forward and said slowly.

"Yea, you two have had some misunderstandings and disagreements. Ye Patriarch we understand your misgivings with the Du family, but general Zhou and I are the judges for this fight and you trust us, right? That teenager is definitely a Du!" President Dong stated diplomatically.

"Pfft, trust you? You are hilarious!" Ye Zheng Qing started laughed hysterically. He wanted to kill everyone of these liars. He now regretted that he did not train hard enough. If he was stronger his family would have justice!

"Looks like I have to do something to maintain order!" General Zhou swung his right arm and the power of a seven star condensed prime Warrior was unleashed. The telekinetic force knocked Ye Yi into the air and out of the arena.

Du Yuan Ming, Zhou Wu, and Dong Ho were keeping the Ye family in check using their condensed prime Warrior power.

Ye Zhong was the only person left standing in the arena.

"Finally all the trash has been taken out!" The stern looking teenager grinned and jumped into the arena his body covered by a feather like shiny texture. He looked at Ye Zhong with a cruel, sadistic smile and said, "Don't worry, I will keep your corpse in one piece!"

Primal feathers, seven star Warrior!

Just as the audience thought they had seen all there was today, they were again shocked, this time by a baby-faced seven star Warrior!

Ye Zhong clenched his fist as he looked at the teenager with worry in his eyes.

Ye Zheng Qing on the other hand was using his power and trying to combat the three Warrior's oppressive auras. "Du Yuan Ming, just bring it on if you want to wipe us out cut the acting!"

"Brother Ye you are taking this whole thing too personally, I really am a

reasonable man!" The Du Patriarch looked relaxed smiling when he spoke.

The big battle was now underway and a cold atmosphere slowly covered the arena.

The Ye family had never before been humiliated like this. Just before the fight was going to start a familiar childlike boy ran into the arena.

Chapter 39: Concession

The duel between the Ye and Du family's youngsters occupied Ye Wei's mind. Ye Wei could not think about anything else as he was running back home. He was anxious and restless about the situation back at the arena. He was running home at full speed, and despite recently breaking through and becoming a three star Student his body was still not strong enough to cover the trip's distance at full speed.

All eyes suddenly gathered on Ye Wei.

The two supporters for the Du camp were agitated by his arrival, it was plausible that he went to see Master Yi judging by his means of transportation on his way out. Depending on the result of this hypothetical meeting they might have to alter their course of action.

"Little Wei, did you meet with Master Yi?" Ye Wei could not have come at a better time, and Zheng Qing did not give Ye Wei anytime to catch his breath. He asked anxiously, his gaze was serious.

Everyone was thirsty for Ye Wei's answer.

"We did meet..." Overwhelmed by the crowd's enthusiasm and embarrassed by the outcome, Ye Wei lowered his head and answered quietly.

With a rush of blood to his head he was starting to flush. It was not easy to tell others the shameful news.

The Du camp was pressured by his arrival while Ye Wei's whole family was momentarily encouraged by the potential good news. But Ye Wei knew how things would go...

Just thinking about the consonance test results made him bitter. He bit his lips due to his nerves. The burden in his heart made him clench his fist extremely tight and his nails were going to leave red marks on his palm. The pain in his heart was so agonising he didn't feel pain on his lips or his hands.

What did his phenomenal soul sensibility mean? Where would his rune

knowledge get him? Ye Wei knew that even though his performance on the tests showed that he was better than most Runemasters, his horrendous rune consonance made the meeting with Master Yi meaningless. How could one become a Runemaster if he can't even perform a stance?

“What did Master Yi say?” Ye Zheng Qing questioned with great enthusiasm.

‘Ye Wei was born to become a Runemaster. It took him only three days to refine three stances for Ye Zhong, a task even real Runemasters would find challenging.’

‘With this level of talent getting accepted by Master Yi was almost a given, even becoming the Master’s legacy apprentice was not out of Ye Wei’s reach! If that were the case with Master Yi’s guidance it wouldn’t take long for Ye Wei to become a Runemaster.’ The patriarch thought to himself.

Ye Zheng Qing dedicated his whole life nurturing the Ye family, from babysitting to dealing with their business. Now at his old age and despite his time and effort he still had not been rewarded for what he gave the family; the family was still weakening and falling apart bit by bit. He was a three star condensed prime Warrior, but he was also an infirm old man with unfulfilled dreams.

At this point, there was nothing more uplifting than seeing his children and grandchildren achieving greatness!

“I’m sorry...” Ye Wei looked completely deflated. His family’s eyes were stabbing his heart like sharp knives.

Ye Zheng Qing flinched. He didn’t need further explanation nor did Ye Wei did elaborate. All his bubbles burst and bitterness was the only thing left, ‘How naive was I? It’s Master Yi we’re talking about in the end. The strict and eccentric Runemaster..’

“Little Wei, I am sure you did your best. We have no other choice. We’ll have to give up the land by North Hill Bay and start again somewhere far from Green Moon City.’ Ye Zheng Qing thought about fighting to his last

breath, but in the end it was just out of his character which put his family's future and well-being before everything else.

Meanwhile the Du camp was speculating.

"General Zhou, president Dong, looks like they were bluffing in the end. If Master Yi was on their side he would have arrived in a runicle for this emergency!" Du Yuan Ming said in a mocking tone, nothing worried him now and he felt on top of the world.

"You are right!" Dong Ho laughed and said, "Without a Runemaster the Ye family is nothing to be afraid of! Ha!"

"I'm afraid they won't see the sunrise tomorrow!" General Zhou roared as killing intent was emanating out of his body.

Ye Zheng Qing slowly looked up towards the arena at Ye Zhong who was injured and barely standing. If he kept fighting he would die. After an easy risk assessment, the Ye Patriarch announced: "Du Yuan Ming. We concede, our ancestral land is yours!" He swallowed his pride while trembling in frustration and grief.

The audience had mixed feelings. They came anticipating a one sided duel and wanted to see the Du family showcase their power, but having witnessed the Ye family's resilience against these cheats they started to empathize and root for the underdogs. They actually felt uneasy now that it was all over and started to worry about themselves.

'We might be the next victim of the Du family's schemes!'

"You think this is over? Ye Zheng Qing, just who do you think we are?" Du Yuan Ming said and casted an evil gaze at the Ye Patriarch. He would not let the Ye family off that easily, especially now that the relationship between them the worst ever.

"Du Yuan Ming what more do you want!?" Ye Zheng Qing's heart dropped. The two people that mattered most to him were Ye Wei and Ye Zhong. These two cousins were the key to the Ye family reestablishing themselves after today's slaughter.

"Ye Zhong injured Han Yue, he is not leaving the arena with his arms

and legs!” Du Han Yue’s voice was malicious. He scanned the Ye camp and found Ye Wei. Pointing his finger at the depressed young cousin, Du Yuan Ming continued. “I want him crippled as well!”

He wanted to eliminate all threats, and kill the ones with potential while they were still young; put all the eggs in a basket and destroy them together. These were the guidelines the Du family stood by, and also the reason why they became one of the Big Three in less than a hundred years after they started their business in Green Moon City.

Du Yuan Ming’s eyes and attitude reminded Ye Wei of a nasty, venomous snake. He was scared and angry at himself. ‘Why couldn’t I be stronger...’

Ye Wei’s Sentient was boiling, and a golden flash appeared. He longed for power, the ability to make a difference.

He was tired of feeling helpless!

“Du Yuan Ming, You ought to stop now!” Ye Zheng Qing could no longer keep his cool as he screamed his lungs out. If Ye Zhong and Ye Wei were going to be neutralised here then there would be no outs for the Ye family, not now not ever.

“Me? Stop? I am a fair man and I stand by my decisions!” Du Yuan Ming then laughed hysterically, and attacked the Ye camp with his sonic waves. His condensed prime cultivation was translated into pressure waves. The force was almost as strong as a landslide!

“I am only going to say this once more. Though we are not as great as we once were the Ye family still carries great tradition and history! I have lived long enough!” Ze Zheng Qing finally made up his mind to be reckless. “We will end this right now!”

“You are so naive! Ending this? What with?” Du Yuan Ming chuckled indifferently. Master Yi wasn’t here with the Ye family while he had aid of general Zhou and president Dong who were both stronger than Ye Zheng Qing in terms of cultivation. “I was never scared of you and your pathetic family. I was just waiting for this little one to return so I can save a trip!”

Although the the odds were against them, the Ye family prepared themselves as they reached their last straw. Everyone started channeling their Qi which then merged into a pressure wave, shooting towards Du Yuan Ming's attack.

“Boom!”

The two pressure waves collided and exploded. The pressure wave kept coming from both camps, and the continuous impact eventually turned the greenstone floor into dust.

“Since you guys are fighting instead of obeying the winner's request we are going to join in!” Dong Ho's squinted eyes opened, and he stared coldly at the Ye camp.

General Zhou and Dong He joined the fight as Dong He finished his excuse of a speech. The force wave from Du camp enlarged and started crushing the Ye camp.

Chapter 40: Bones

Du Yuan Ming and general Zhou were both seven star condensed prime Warriors. Dong Ho was slightly behind being a five star condensed prime Warrior.

On the other hand, the Ye camp only had two condensed prime level Warriors. The strongest of them being the patriarch with a three star condensed prime cultivation.

The three strongest Warriors in the Du camp were more than capable of wiping out the Ye family on their own! And all three of them intended to kill.

“Bang! Bang! Bang!”

The three strongest force waves from the Du camp merged and clashed onto the Ye family’s defense.

Ye Zhong, Ye Wei, and other weaker ones’ meridians were shaken and hurt by the force wave. They were knocked down on their knees and coughed up blood.

“Damn it!” Ye Wei could barely breathe under the immense pressure. He desperately tried to draw power from his Sentient as he channeled all his Qi to fight the crushing power of the three high level condensed prime Warriors. But the gap was too vast. Ye Wei could feel, and almost hear, his Sentient cracking.

Du Yuan Ming’s first step was to destroy all the younger Ye’s!

Seeing the youngster being hit, Ye Zheng Qing became anxious. If this continues he would become a witness to the end of his own bloodline!

“I guess it’s now or never!” A determined look briefly flashed through Ye Zheng Qing’s eyes before he looked down at his hand. A glinting and translucent bone bracelet slid down from his wrist.

There were eighteen pieces of bone fragments in the chain. The engraved fragments emitted a weak iridescent glow. The runes engraved onto the fragments started glowing brighter as the patriarch injected his

Qi into the artifact, and waves of rippling energy burst out from the chain.

Mystic Arm!

Du Yuan Ming, Zhou Wu, and Dong Ho all looked extremely concerned seeing what Ye Zheng Qing was holding in his hand as if the glow of the bone fragments stunned them.

Ye Zheng Qing was levels weaker than his three opponents, he should have been neutralised within moments because of the gap in power. But after seeing the bracelet, the three were hesitant as they weren't sure what power it held.

Although they were now a washed up family, the Ye's were once indisputably the most powerful presence in Green Moon City. History was history, and stories did not threaten the Du camp, but the family's heirlooms did!

Lu Feng wanted the land at North Hill Bay which was basically already in his pocket so now the Du Patriarch wanted to wipe them out. Fighting the Ye family was not really General Zhou's business anymore; he was not willing to risk his life fighting an unknown artifact because his job was done. He quickly backed away behind Du Yuan Ming and said "I will go after Ye Hai, the Ye Patriarch is all yours!"

General Zhou took off towards Ye Hai before Du patriarch could reply.

"I will take on the rest of the Ye family!" Dong Ho tried to make avoiding confronting Ye Zheng Qing's secret weapon sound just as he headed towards the second generation of Ye's.

Both Dong Ho and Zhou Wu laid their eyes on the artifact with greed. But the Ye Patriarch was not that weak, and with the power of his bracelet still being a mystery the two were not willing to risk too much.

Du Yuan Ming too was somewhat scared by the green glow of the bracelet.

Mystic Arms can store stances which were activated by the Qi of the user. They were sorted into five different grades, low, medium, top,

imperial, and sacred. Each grade then divided into ten star levels.

Low grade arms store Spirit stances, and they glow black when activated.

Medium grade arms store Myst stances, and glow green while activated. Top grade arms store Earth stances, and have a silver glow; whereas Imperial grade arms store Sky stances, they glow gold while activated.

Sacred grade arms, rare as they were, store Heaven stances and glow purple!

Mystic Arms were crafted from bones of rare beasts and demons. Some of these powerful creatures carry stances in their bodies and bones therefore their remains were always sought after by men. And these artifacts even low grade ones were very rare. The stances within are unique and therefore hard to deal with.

Judging by the glow, Ye Zheng Qing's Mystic Arm was medium grade. There were less than five pieces of that quality in all of Green Moon City, and all of them were valued family heirlooms that won't be put to use unless absolutely necessary. The fact that Ye Patriarch owns this piece adds a bit more mystery to the Ye family's history.

The power of a medium grade arm was great enough to threaten condensed prime Warriors.

"No wonder why you refused to hand your ancestral land over. What else do you have up your sleeve old fart?" Du Yuan Ming glared at the Ye Patriarch with intensity.

Du Yuan Ming's cultivation advantage over Ye Zheng Qing had just been evened by the artifact as such the result of the fight was not so clear all of a sudden.

The audience was surprised to see what the Ye Patriarch was holding.

"That green glow! The Ye family is holding nothing back! I had no idea they had access a Mystic Arm!"

"The Ye family is full of surprises aren't they! Do you think Du

Patriarch can deal with the Mystic Arm?"

Some of the audience were drooling over Ye Patriarch's artifact hoping that the two families will weaken each other, and when the chance presents itself the Mystic Arm would be up for grabs. Medium grade arms talk louder than money does.

"Is it really a good move showing his bracelet this soon? Or fighting the Du family at all? He might be able to take down Du Patriarch, but is it really worth... That medium grade arm will just end up in Zhou Wu or Dong Ho's hands!"

"This is going to get messy kind of exciting isn't it?" Stronger members of the audience were just standing back and waiting for the start.

Du Yuan Ming laughed, "Ye Zheng Qing, do you think you are the only person here with dirty tricks up your sleeves? You're not seriously thinking you can save your family with that sissy bracelet do you? Let me tell you a little secret, we have back-up! Someone high up and powerful wants your land. It's not convenient for him to show his face, but he did gave us a few things to help seal the deal! You have no chance against us what you just did is basically handing over a valuable item!"

The whole Ye camp heard what he said, and their hearts dropped. Ye Zheng Qing was saddened. Just the thought of a powerful figure behind this campaign scared him. 'Who is powerful enough to use Du family as a chess piece? What have I done wrong to deserve this?'

The Ye family was full of questions. They had never been this scared. However, there was one person who was more angry than he was scared. Ye Wei had been through a lot lately, all the negativity converted to anger then despair.

'I swear if I live this day, I will find out who is behind this, and whoever it is will pay for the suffering of my family!' Ye Wei swore.

"Power speaks for itself! Watch this! Ye Patriarch and you will see how little you and your family are!" Du Yuan Ming laughed and fetched three scrolls from his pocket; the three scrolls the radiated a faint green light.

Chapter 41: The Ichor Palm

Ye Zheng Qing was shocked to see three green scrolls in the Du Patriarch's hand. The Du family was resourceful, but a medium grade mystic scrolls were super rare, and not something one could acquired through wealth!

A Myst stance was inscribed on each of the scrolls which activates when one tears the scroll.

Mystic Arms and scrolls both have their pros and cons.

The scrolls are relatively cheaper and their activation require no Qi, but the downside is that they are one-use artifacts. Once torn and activated they were useless, and only a fraction of the inscribed stance's power would be released compared to a Mystic Arm.

The arms were reusable, and activated by Qi they would release the full potential of the stance stored in them as long as the Qi of the user lasted. Their price and rarity were their drawbacks, together with the fact that they don't work when the user runs out of Qi, unlike scrolls.

Having said that, both medium grade arms and scrolls were very rare, and people who possess them usually prefer to keep them.

"The person backing us gave me these three scrolls though I never thought I'd have to use them. You should be proud of yourself for putting me in this situation!" Du Yuan Ming sneered.

Both Zhou Wu and Dong Ho were jealous of the Du Patriarch. They kept a healthy relationship with Lu Feng but had never received any gifts like the patriarch did.

Lu Feng was strong but he was not capable of inscribing medium grade scrolls. These three scroll were made by nobody other than his master, Master Mu, himself.

"Du Yuan Ming, none of us are afraid of dying for the family!" Ye Zheng Qing turned around, energized by the courageous faces of his kins and said to the Du Patriarch. "We are all in! Maybe we won't make it through

today, but your family will not walk out of this arena the way you came in, if you walk out at all!”

Ye Zheng Qing stared at the Du camp as he furiously injected Qi into the bone bracelet.

The bracelet rattled and hummed! It radiated a blurry but bright green burst of light as the runes carved on the bone fragments twitched. The runes were then projected onto the green blurry light sphere. They transformed it into the shape of an enormous bird, and a big burst of energy exploded from the artifact!

The bird’s call was proportional to the size of the creature. It spreaded its wings and flew towards the Du camp.

“No!” Du Yuan Ming started panicking, “I will deal with Ye Zheng Qing while you two wipe out the rest of them!” He said to Zhou Wu and Dong Ho as he torn up one of the scrolls. A thick vine shot out of the broken scroll and lashed towards the large green bird. The bird was tangled and slowed moments after.

The destruction of two condensed prime Warriors armed with Mystic Arms and scrolls was life threatening, and because of this the audience started running away in panic as the scale of this fight escalated quickly.

“Boom!”

Although tangled in vines, the green bird’s attack was not stopped. It opened its beak and spat out a scotching pillar of flame. This incinerated a few of the Du youngsters who were too slow to react, and their chilling cries slowly faded in the sea of fire.

“Damn it!” Du Yuan Ming’s expression was twisted. With the impeccable speed of a seven star condensed prime Warrior he traveled to the Ye side of the arena in a blink of an eye. He was levitating over the Ye youngsters with a long sequence of glowing runes already on his fingertip.

Together with this stance he tore up the second scroll. This summoned balls of fire that rained down onto the large green bird. They left long

trails of fire which resembled colossal comets breaking through the atmosphere.

It took two medium grade scrolls on top of a Qi shield to finally stop the the vigorous attack of the green bird. But Du Ming Yue's rage had not subsided because of the casualties they suffered he was not going to just let this go. "Do it!"

Zhou Wu and Dong Ho chuckled as they charged towards the Ye camp. The general's hand spread open, and it was as big as a hand fan. He extended his arm and reached towards Ye Wei.

"Don't touch my nephew!" Ye Hai shouted then channeled his Qi striking out with his palm.

"You are not in my league!" Zhou Wu laughed and punched Ye Hai's palm with his other hand. Ye Hai's arm immediately shattered upon contact. Ye Hai was overpowered by the crushing momentum, he spat out blood and fell to the ground.

There were cruel smiles on both the general and president's faces as Ye Hai was thrown back.

"You guys are rubbish! Is there anyone here who can fight? I am getting bored! If you're not going to fight back I will just end your miserable lives and send you lot to meet your ancestors!" Zhou Wu quickly wrote a rune sequence with each of his hands.

"Buzz!"

Driven by Qi, the runes started rattling. The runes transformed into twenty blood red palms, each of them was ten meters long and emanated vile Qi out of the grooves and palm lines. They were just like the gigantic hands of a demon.

Myst stance, Ichor Palms!

"Bang!"

The red palms were still materializing, but they were already emitting petrifying pressure waves that knocked all the Ye youngsters including Ye

Wei onto the ground. They were pressed against the floor looking pale and defenseless.

“Crack!”

The commanding power of Zhou Wu was menacing! Before actually attacking, the red palms were just hovered in the air, but Ye Wei’s joints were starting to crack as if they were about to be shattered. The pressure waves mercilessly pushed against him causing him to bleed internally and spit out more blood.

“Little Wei!” Ye Zhong clumsily stepped to Ye Wei’s side. He turned his head to his little cousin and shouted with a broken voice after seeing his precious partner’s condition. “Over my dead body!”

“And my tiger!” Ye Zhong forced his Sentient and dantian dry with the last bit of his will-force and Qi he forced himself to perform White Tiger’s Assault. There was only one thought in his mind, he had to protect Ye Wei.

“Roar!”

The mighty beast appeared. It growled and immediately lunged at the falling red palm over Ye Wei’s body. The tiger and Ye Zhong shared a ferocious and determined look.

“This is hilarious. You are still just an ordinary Warrior! What are you thinking?” Zhou Wu laughed hysterically then slammed his hand down, and the red palm dropped down with great momentum.

“Bang!”

The white tiger was shattered by the red palm immediately.

They were both Myst stances, but Zhou Wu had decades of training before Ye Zhong was even born. The seven star condensed prime Warrior’s stance broke White Tiger’s Assault upon contact.

“Little Wei, I’m sorry...” Ye Zhong lost consciousness as the tiger was shattered, and his Sentient was fractured.

“Cousin Zhong!” Ye Wei screamed his lungs out as tears were flowing

out of his bloodshot eyes. His Sentient too began to fray.

A golden flash emerged in Ye Wei's Sentient empowering his body so it stayed rigid under the immense pressure.

One by one the Ye's dropped to the ground with blood coming from their mouths. Ye Wei was standing but his consciousness was fading.

"A Student and still on your feet? Admirable!" Zhou Wu grunted and channeled more Qi, ten more red palms struck towards Ye Wei with even stronger force.

Chapter 42: Master Yi

“No!” Ye Wei’s eyes were bloodshot as he looked around him. He grunted in agony as he was saddened by his fallen brothers and sisters bathed in blood.

As the red palms approached Ye Wei, the spine-chilling force intensified exponentially. His bones started to crack and his wounded body couldn’t stop bleeding, even his Sentient which was protected by the golden light was starting to rupture. His whole body was on the edge of breaking.

The pain Ye Wei suffered from his tearing Sentient was ten times greater than his body was enduring; the pain was striking his soul. However strong Ye Wei’s mind was, there was no way he could stay conscious for much longer.

Suffering from critical haemorrhaging, his blood started coming out of the pores on Ye Wei’s skin. He was no longer conscious, but his body was somehow still standing straight!

“Buzz!”

Just as Ye Wei lost consciousness, the mystic mountain appeared in Ye Wei’s Sentient, and the golden light started repairing and patching up the cracks.

Some of the energy even escaped his Sentient and rushed throughout the rest of his body, into his blood, muscles, and bones. This energy silently nourished Ye Wei’s body causing it to repair and even strengthen itself at an incredible rate! Bathing in this energy, his body would have the strength of a four star Student in mere minutes.

What Ye Wei was experiencing sped up his cultivation enormously. He was catching up to the naturally gifted children his age, but his life is now at risk. It was at the mercy of his luck and the gigantic red palms shown no sign of stopping!

“Little Wei!”

Ye Zheng Qing looked at his grandson in despair. Hoping it was not too late, he hastefully injected his Qi into the bone bracelet.

The large green bird in the sky shook and broke through the vines with a couple wing strikes then it flew towards Ye Wei immediately after it got free.

The patriarch's bracelet was actually a six star medium grade Mystic Arm. The stance within was powerful enough to threaten even a seven star Warrior. However, the distance between him and Ye Wei was far, despite the effort the red palms made contact with Ye Wei.

"No!" Ye Zheng Qing's vocal cord was close to tearing. His cry echoed throughout the arena; it was the only sound that could be heard.

Zhou Wu was extremely excited, his lips curved upwards showing a sadistic smile. It has been too long since he last saw a bloodbath. He had been picturing himself drawing blood since the fight broke out.

"Who dares hurt my apprentice?!" An angry voice came out of nowhere loud as thunder. It staggered everyone in the arena. The cry was powerful as a force of nature.

Before the voice faded, a sequence of some three-hundred runes appeared in the skyline and merged together instantly radiating a blinding light. They formed thirty golden fists with unproportionally large knuckles, filling the sky.

This mighty presence made everyone at the arena think that a god had arrived it seemed as if the sky itself was pressing down onto them.

The condensed prime Warriors were the only ones who had an idea of what was happening. The Du Patriarch and general Zhou were two of the strongest men in Green Moon City, but they were shivering under this pressure like everyone else.

Rays of golden light from the fists shone onto the red palms and subsequently dissolved them in an instant right above the Ye camp.

"Swish!"

The golden fists dropped from the sky like a rain of comets. They accelerated towards Du Yuan Ming, Zhou Wu, and Dong Ho. These fists connected with the three in a flash, and their chests took most of the hits. All three were sent flying and spinning like a kite with its string cut.

Their ribcages were broken, and they simultaneously spat blood turning pale. The three were put into a life threatening situation from their commanding positions in a mere moment.

While the Du Patriarch was flying he saw a blue shape far far away through his dilated pupils. It was a square object that resembled a tiny temple. He suddenly realised it was the runicle he saw earlier, and his heart sank in fear and panic.

What kind of monster could injure three condensed prime Warriors from a mile away? Nobody at the scene knew that this kind of power existed.

Half a minute passed as the blue runicle drew closer. It came to a stop right by the destroyed arena.

The door slid open, and a ragged-clothed old man with shaggy hair walked out of the runicle. The sky went dark the moment this vulgar figure stepped his foot onto the arena. Master Yi had arrived!

There was a golden glow in Master Yi's eyes, his levitating body emanated a force field that covered the whole arena and caused the air around him to ripple.

He scanned the arena with his golden eyes, and his calm stare was penetrating. People at the arena were intimidated by his pressure and trembled uncontrollably.

"Master Yi!" Du Yuan Ming, Zhou Wu, and Dong Ho were as pale as ghosts, and they looked at the Runemaster in fear. They couldn't believe what just happened.

General Zhou and President Dong stared at the Du Patriarch resentfully, and regretted helping him. Never in their wildest dreams did they think they would anger Master Yi because of it.

“I am Zhou Wu!”

“I am Dong Ho!”

“Greetings Master Yi!” The two said in unison. Being nice to the Runemaster was more important than the pain they were suffering and their regret. They bowed down before Master Yi while grinding their teeth.

Master Yi was always in his own world, and this was the first social interaction he had for a while. If it wasn't for Ye Wei he would be at home studying and researching runes and stances.

“Greetings Master Yi, my name is Du Yuan Ming!” The patriarch knew he was in trouble as Master Yi never got himself involved in family disputes and from the Runemaster's behavior he could tell the Ye family was protected. Du Yuan Ming had temporarily forgotten about the deal with Lu Feng, and he was just focused on how to survive Master Yi's wrath.

The Du Patriarch's status meant nothing in front of this sociopath. Not only was Master Yi an individual with immeasurable strength, he was also someone who was worshipped. If he started a fight and somehow needed help, he would get it.

“Master Yi!” The audience too bowed to the Runemaster. For many of them it was an honor seeing his face, and some of them just wanted to leave a good impression on the most powerful man in Green Moon City. Surely some of the audience's grandchildren would hear about the story of this encounter.

Master Yi looked less than ordinary, his appearance did not reflect his achievements at all. Du Yuan Ming was surprised that the powerful golden fist stance came from someone who looked like this.

The Du Patriarch was going to mention his relationship with Master Mu in hopes that it would gain Master Yi's respect. But after experiencing Master Yi's power first hand, he realized Master Yi was on a completely different realm than the second most famous Runemaster in Green Moon City, and there would be no point in dropping Master Mu's name.

“Master Yi please don’t be angry. We did not know the Ye family was affiliated with you. We are really sorry!” Zhou Wu broke silence and begged Master Yi for forgiveness with a trembling voice as his legs went soft.

Dong Ho too was scared of the consequences. His white lips were twitching as he tried to talk himself out of trouble. “I have no idea what the Du family is trying to get me and the general into. They invited us without telling us any details!” He cowardly shouldered the responsibility and the blame on the Du family.

Master Yi grunted. He did not look at anyone in the Du camp as he headed straight to the Ye camp after hearing the excuses, more specifically towards Ye Wei.

He turned his head around and casually gazed at Zhou Wu and Dong Ho. Not only did this scare them, but their chests were hammered by Master Yi’s invisible strike and they coughed and choked on their own blood.

Chapter 43: Rain

“I am the Ye Patriarch. Greetings Master Yi!” Ye Zheng Qing slowly walked towards their savior, and gave the traditional two hand greeting, palm against fist, as he spoke nervously.

“Hey!” Master Yi’s face was emotionless. He stopped walking to nod at Ye Zheng Qing, who was flattered by the small acknowledgment from the fabled figure.

Even though the exchange was brief, Ye Zheng Qing was really proud of the fact that the Runemaster responded because Master Yi ignored the three leaders of the Du camp when they greeted him. When his status and more importantly his cultivation was pretty far behind them, only at three star condensed prime stage, he still gave Ye Zheng Qing face.

“Master Yi...” Ye Zheng Qing looked at the Runemaster’s back. He was excited but shortly after, he frowned in confusion when he realized Master Yi was only nice to him because he was related to Ye Wei. Who told the family he did not make it through the entrance exam? ‘If that was the case why is he here!?’

The Ye Patriarch stood still both grateful for and confused by Master Yi’s intervention. He just hoped it was not too late for Ye Wei and the youngsters. If not then this experience will strengthen them more than it would scar them.

“Ye Wei!” Lin Zi Yan nervously ran out of the runicle once the situation was stabilized by Master Yi. Her ink black pupils became bright purple the moment he saw Ye Wei’s damaged body in the middle of fallen Ye youngsters.

An invisible wave of energy was emitted by her as her eyes turned purple, it swept the arena like a breeze. The tulip on her robe was flowing in the wind and the air around her began to freeze.

“Girl!” Master Yi felt the fall in temperature. His face twitched, and he turned around to Lin Zi Yan. It was apparent that he was concerned about what she might do when he saw the color of her pupils.

“Ye Wei is fine!” Master Yi shouted anxiously, desperately trying to calm Lin Zi Yan’s anger. He knew what she was capable of doing in a frenzy. She was just a Warrior, but she was one from that family. Justice is one thing, but a massacre is another matter entirely. Master Yi ran over to Zi Yan then held her by his side, calming her down. Her eyes gradually returned to their normal state; she was reassured but still breathed a bit quicker than normal.

Master Yi then scanned around himself, assessing the injuries the Ye camp sustained. Most of the youngsters were critically injured by Du Yuan Ming and were in need of immediate medical attention.

‘Oh Ye Wei, you reckless child!’ Master Yi looked at Ye Wei, who though covered in blood and unconscious, was still on his feet. His eyes were still glimmering. ‘Stubborn and strong willed, this one will go far if he stays out of trouble!’ He was glad he made it in time. He was very close to having a big regret that would have haunted him for the rest of his life.

Wasting no more time, Master Yi with a grave look on his face rapidly drew a sequence of three hundred and sixty-six runes with both of his hands, and immediately injected his dense Qi into them.

Master Yi’s Qi circulated through the sequence and shook the runes. The illuminating runes then transformed into a large cloud of green fog that shrouded the Ye camp.

The cloud condensed into drops of green rain which nourished the injured youngsters. The visible wounds were quickly healing at an abnormal speed under the moisturization of the glowing raindrops.

Forbidden level Myst stance, Green Mizzle.

Du Yuan Ming, Zhou Wu, and Dong Ho were all able to identify this stance; they were all shocked and envious.

The Green Mizzle was a rare and miraculous stance Master Yi was rumored to possess. It had the power to heal and rejuvenate human bodies to a fresh and healthy condition as long as they were still breathing.

Lives of Warriors were not calm or comfortable. They were bound to accumulate injuries over time from fighting demons, beasts, and, sadly, even themselves. Many times they would even have to tap their will-force reserve dry, fighting for their lives at the cost of damaging their Sentients. Sentients were such that they could not be repaired or recovered from rest and ordinary medication.

Suffice it to say no condensed prime Warriors got to where they were without battling hundreds of beasts and demons, injuring their bodies and sometimes even their Sentients. The good news for the Ye's was that the Green Mizzle stance could reverse these injuries, at a cost of the user's health. Even the strongest man in Green Moon City can not escape its cost. Even Master Yi could not use this forbidden stance too often.

The last time Master Yi used this stance was some eighteen years ago when a massive beast horde laid siege to Green Moon City. Eight generals of Green Moon City were gravely injured when they defended the city. The beasts were eliminated by their valiant efforts, but their injuries did not go away, and their conditions actually worsened during their five years of rehabilitation and rest. Not only were their bodies not recovering, but their cultivation was also starting to show signs of regression.

In desperation to restore the city's defense, the city lord offered Master Yi a million silver in exchange to use the Green Mizzle stance on the injured generals. The stance worked miracles, and the eight generals went back to the line of duty as stronger men.

A million silvers! The Du camp was jealous because it was not them receiving this treatment. They were also scared for their future because it showed how much Master Yi cared for the family they just mercilessly violated.

Having said that, Master Yi did not do it for the money eight years ago; he did it out of respect. The eight generals gave their all and got injured fighting armies of beasts! He would have done it for free. The ten star Runemaster was living self-sustainably, he did not care about wealth nor living a life of luxury.

‘Du Yuan Ming you idiot! You and your stupid reports! How could you miss this!? Who is going to deal with Master Yi?’ General Zhou panicked.

‘If the city lord hears about this, I will certainly lose my position!’

The general was anxious. He looked at the Du Patriarch with a pernicious stare and quietly swore and cursed. Unlike Du Yuan Ming, he did not have a good network, and it would be hard for him to keep his job if the city lord knows he had bad blood with Master Yi. The Du family was connected to Master Mu’s legacy apprentice Lu Feng, who might be able to help them rebuild their reputation in Green Moon City.

Dong Ho was even more concerned about his future. In the business world, public relations and reputation was everything. If people spread the word about his involvement in a dispute with Master Yi, his merchant guild would definitely lose clients and suppliers. Ruining a name that took centuries of hard work to build.

The members of the audience that recognized the Green Mizzle stance were shocked, and they could not quite believe what Master Yi used it voluntarily. Using the stance made Master Yi look pale as he was quietly catching his breath.

While the Ye family was recovering, the whole arena turned quiet. Humbled by the Runemaster’s offensive and healing powers. Everyone was frozen in awe.

They would never correctly guess the reason Master Yi did all this for the Ye family. But one thing was sure; the Ye’s were now out of bounds! Nobody would dare touch them again; they were protected by someone incredible.

The members of bigger families who were present all had one thought in their minds, ‘I need to tell the family about what just happened today... The Du family’s greed, the Ye family’s hidden strengths, and the power of Master Yi!’ It was fortunate not many people related Master Yi’s intervention to Ye Wei, or else the young talent would be in more danger than he could ever imagine.

With Master Yi now publically supporting the Ye family, their future

was brighter than ever before. Not that the Ye family wanted to be carried by connections, but respect and fear are what they will learn to accept from now on as they got back to their everyday life.

The Ye family's reputation too had been restored. Not to the level it once was, but now they had a good foundation to become something amazing.

Chapter 44: Legacy

The green rain was slowing, and the cloud of fog began to fade.

The Ye family was feeling fresh after ten minutes under Green Mizzle's affect, wounds on their bodies vanished, and even the small cracks in their Sentients disappeared. The rejuvenated Ye's started to regain consciousness and opened their eyes.

Although he was heavily injured compared to others, Ye Wei also slowly opened his eyes. Ye Zhong though was still unresponsive because his Sentient was far too damaged, to the point that it could not be repaired by even Master Yi's stance.

Ye Zhong's clothes were still shredded, but his body was now uninjured. What one could not see with the naked eye was his Sentient's state. It was broken into pieces and covered in hideous scars.

To protect his dear cousin, Ye Zhong ignored his injuries from fighting Du Han Yue. Not only did he use White Tiger's Assault when his body was in a terrible condition, but he also took a clean hit from Zhou Wu's Ichor Palm for Ye Wei.

'It was a miracle Ye Zhong managed to live after taking a hit from someone with such a vast cultivation advantage over himself. It's worth mentioning that he was completely out of will-force and Qi.' Ye Zheng Qing sighed.

"Cousin Zhong!"

Ye Wei's eyes popped wide open the moment he regained full consciousness. He anxiously cast his eyes to where Ye Zhong was. His cousin protected him against the Ichor Palm with White Tiger's Assault was his last memory before fainting.

It was almost like time unfroze when he woke up, and it was his reflex to check if his cousin was okay.

Seeing his cousin lying unconscious with his eyes closed, Ye Wei teared up and crawled towards Ye Zhong. He sat next to the selfless Warrior and

guarded his motionless body.

“Ye Wei! Are you okay?” Ye Wei’s could not care about anyone other than Ye Zhong while Lin Zi Yan could not worry about anyone else but Ye Wei. She wasn’t completely calm until she actually saw Ye Wei open his eyes. She looked relieved and exhausted from the distress.

“Zi Yan, Master Yi...” Ye Wei looked around him. He saw that Master Yi and Lin Zi Yan stood next to him, further away Du Yuan Ming, Zhou Wu, and Dong Ho were bleeding and were on their knees. It wasn’t long until he figured out what happened.

“Thank you, Master Yi! Thanks for saving us!” Ye Wei said from the bottom of his heart and bowed politely.

He figured out the what and when, but the why was still a mystery. Master Yi declined Ye Wei’s request just a while ago.

‘Why did he...’

‘It’s already been proven... I won’t even be able to perform a stance. Zi Yan must have convinced him somehow... How much do I owe her now.’

Oblivious to his actual capacity, Ye Wei was again opting to pathetic thoughts and couldn’t be more thankful to Lin Zi Yan for yet more help. Apart from that he was impressed by her influence, It’s hard even for influential figures to get an appointment with Master Yi, but not only did Zi Yan arranged the entry exam for him in a short notice now she got him to save his family and him.

‘Does she like me that much? How can I ever repay her?’ Ye Wei looked at Zi Yan, as she was looking at him nervously. Her pretty face showed nothing but concern over Ye Wei’s condition. Ye Wei’s heart melted because of this misunderstanding.

“I feel okay!” Ye Wei forcefully squeezed out a smile. His memories were slowly returning. He remembered how badly injured he was, thus realizing how far Master Yi went just to save him. ‘My torn Sentient, the broken bones, and muscles are now in perfect condition!’

“Master Yi, the Ye family is forever in your debt! We will never forget

about this favor!" Ye Zheng Qing gathered up the family and bowed to the Runemaster. "If there is anything you can use manpower for, you can ask us anytime. We are three hundred strong, and ready to do anything you want us to!" The Ye Patriarch declared solemnly.

Although Master didn't really need their help, Ye Zheng Qing's sincerity did move him a little.

Upon hearing Ye Zheng Qing's touching speech, he waved his hand and said with a smile, "Don't mention it, I didn't do much! Furthermore..." Master Yi shifted his focus to Ye Wei as his eyes were full of joy. "Furthermore, I've decided to take Ye Wei as my apprentice, from now on he will be my legacy apprentice!"

Everyone who heard what Master Yi just said turned their head to Ye Wei. They couldn't believe their ears.

Master Yi had a few apprentices through the years, but all of them were just tutored occasionally, they were more like his assistants.

They were all good learners who had the potential to become Runemasters in their lives. But Master Yi did not think they were talented enough, and he never taught them his secrets. Master Yi merely guided them while the apprentices did self-study. Even those apprentices had great lives with their superb reputations, and now Ye Wei was appointed to become his legacy apprentice!

Though the announcement drew a lot of attention and jealousy, Master Yi's intention was met. He wanted everyone to know the Ye family was off limits! People were speechless and would appreciate the Ye family's status coming out of today's events.

Du Yuan Ming, Zhou Wu, and Dong Ho were kneeling close to the arena's center with their faces pale as if they were headed to the guillotine.

It was becoming apparent to them that they were now Master Yi's enemies. One must know the relationship between masters and legacy apprentices were as close as fathers to their children.

During this time, Ye Wei was still confused; he wondered if something happened when he was unconscious that changed Master Yi's mind.

Master Yi kept his eyes on Ye Wei and continued his speech, "I have decided to pass all the knowledge and skills I possess onto Ye Wei!" Master Yi got excited just by thinking about Ye Wei's future. The child's innocence and humbleness would help the Runemaster mold him into something greater than anyone ever imagined, even greater than his own master.

Ye Zheng Qing was just quietly stood at the side, trying to digest everything he just heard. The message could not be any clearer. The renowned Master Yi, this outstanding Runemaster, had chosen his grandson as his legacy apprentice. Although he knew what it meant, it proved to be something that the Ye Patriarch could not fathom.

After processing the words they heard, the rest of the Yi family too became hysterical.

"Can you pinch me?"

"Little Wei? Legacy apprentice?"

Ye Wei's eyes were on Master Yi's gentle face while the Runemaster kindly asked a question. "I am not sure if I am qualified to teach someone like you, but would you like to be my, Yi Yan's apprentice?"

How could Ye Wei in his right mind refuse? "Of course, I would love to be your apprentice!" He answered with slight confusion in his voice. "Greetings Master!" He bowed before Master Yi.

Master Yi burst into laughter looking Ye Wei's clueless face. "Very good!" He replied.

The Ye family was feeling ecstatic, especially Ye Zheng Qing. He has been through ups and downs with his family, and after seeing it on the edge of crumbling, now he could see the silver lining. It was reasonable that he was in tears.

Ye Wei's uncles too were overwhelmed by emotions as well. They were all startled by this unlikely source of intervention and honored to be

related to Master Yi's new apprentice.

‘Everything Master Yi knows? Just how lucky are the Ye's today?’ From being in a dire situation to now being at a place everyone envied in just a morning, it was all too unfathomable. They knew too well what having a Runemaster in one's family implied...

Chapter 45: It's Not Fair

Contrary to the Ye family's elated mood, Du Yuan Ming, Zhou Wu, and Dong Ho were feeling unsettled and frightened.

The Du Patriarch perniciously looked at the Ye camp. He was so close to getting rid of them, and now they were about to get away as if nothing happened. The feeling of being stopped one step away from eradicating a threat was like nothing else, especially when they were going to come back stronger, and be protected by someone like Master Yi!

Most of the Ye youngsters had now woken up. They didn't think too much about Ye Zhong's condition, as he had endured the most injuries. It was reasonable if he woke up last.

Master Yi was relieved the moment he learned Ye Wei was fine, but he was still curious about why Ye Zhong was not moving. He frowned and narrowed his eyes. A golden flash appeared in his eyes after which he then cast his penetrating gaze onto Ye Zhong, checking his Qi flow and body condition.

He stared at the motionless body for ten seconds, looking worried and mournful.

"This child was gifted, it's such a shame..." He broke the silence after a thorough assessment. He shook his head resentfully and then a long, sad sigh followed.

Ye Zhong's name was the first thing that left Ye Wei's lips after he woke up. Master Yi could tell from his observations that the cousins occupied a large place in each other's hearts. Due to that, he would do anything within his abilities to revive his apprentice's cousin from his coma.

But, sadly, this was not the case. Without the aid of a Welkin Leaf, Ye Zhong might never again see the sun due to his shattered Sentient!

Getting ahold of the rare herb would be just the first step. It could wake him, but the chance of his Sentient completely recovering was less than

ten percent.

Ye Wei's heart dropped when he heard Master Yi's sigh; he asked anxiously, "Master Yi, is my cousin okay?" He nervously clenched his fists while waiting for his master's answer.

"Why is he not waking up?"

Ye Hai asked. The family was getting restless as they too heard the long sigh. Being a five star Warrior at the age of twenty-two, Ye Zhong was well on his way to overtake Ye Zheng Qing's cultivation, and he was the most likely candidate to the patriarch's position.

"This child's Sentient is shattered; he won't be waking up for the rest of his life." Master Yi did not fabricate facts; he did not know how to.

Master Yi's words struck the Ye's like a bolt of lightning that sent shivers down the group's spines. The patriarch and Ye Hai staggered and almost fell.

"But what do you mean? The Green Mizzle didn't save him?!" Ye Hai couldn't accept his son, the strongest youngster, and future of the Ye family was in a vegetative state.

"Shattered Sentient?" Master Yi voice echoed in Ye Wei's head. "Won't be waking up the rest of his life?" He was stupefied, standing still like a soulless being.

'He did that for me... He was fighting an impossible fight against the general for me...'

With a bottomless sense of guilt stabbing at his heart, Ye Wei had severe chest pain. He could hardly breathe.

"Is there any other ways?" Ye Wei's face showed determination, but his trembling voice told otherwise. He clenched his fist, and raised his head to look at Master Yi, "I will do anything for my cousin's recovery, even if it means I have to go through hell."

Inspired by Ye Wei's stubbornness, Master Yi found the answer to the question. "If, a big if... If I can get ahold of some Welkin leaves, I should

be able to restore his consciousness with a fancy stance. But that plant is extremely rare. With it, I will see what I can do!”

“Thanks, Master!” Ye Wei’s mood lightened slightly. ‘If master can’t find it, I will.’ He bowed to Master Yi again.

Du Yuan Ming, Zhou Wu, and Dong Ho knew they were going to be in trouble as they were responsible for every bit of Ye Zhong’s injuries. They tried to sneak away from the scene quietly as the Ye’s started talking about the youngster who was now in a vegetative state.

“Where do you think you’re going?” Master Yi grunted, their sneakiness did not escape his cold gaze.

“Master Yi...” The three were shivering in fear. They would not be able to fight their way out of this situation, not alone, and not together.

“There were some misunderstandings between our family and the Ye’s, but I realize now that we took it a bit too far due to our hotheadedness, and for that we apologize. We didn’t do anything wrong, please just let us go!” Du Yuan Ming said with a trembling voice as he spoke quieter and quieter trying to excuse himself and his crew. He even put down his pride as a patriarch in front of Master Yi.

What Du Yuan Ming said opened Ye Wei’s eyes. ‘You did all this! You shamed, and harmed our family, and you dare say it’s a misunderstanding? If Master is not going to make this right, I will revenge for my family when I am strong enough!’

Master Yi saw Ye Wei’s hateful stare, and it just confirmed the Du family’s wrongdoings. Without a second thought, he started moving his right hand. A long string of runes flew out of his fingertips, and a wave of Qi came crashing like high tide reaching the shore.

Golden Arhat Palm was one of Master Yi’s powerful creations. For most people it was an honor to see his stances two times in one day, but not for these three.

Knowing its power, Du Yuan Ming quickly used the Onyx Tortoise stance. Raw primal energy stuck onto his body forming a thick black

armor that covered every inch of his skin. Zhou Wu roared like a lion and quickly finished a rune sequence, "Primal Blockade!" The runes in his palm grew around themselves; eventually, they dug into and shook the ground forming a hefty Qi wall that stood tall in front of him. 'Glacial Casket!' Dong Ho grunted. His fat was shaking as he channeled Qi. Four sheets of dense ice froze around his body forming a large coffin, shining blue and seemingly impenetrable.

They were not going to fight back to further anger the most powerful man in this corner of the land; therefore, they opted to defend themselves the best they could.

Master Yi grunted and continued channeling his ruthless attack. The golden palms viciously landed on the three's defenses.

Soon as the palms hit, Du Yuan Ming's armors frayed; Zhou Wu's wall disintegrated and the ice of Dong Ho's shattered.

Dong Ho got hit the hardest as his defense was completely irrelevant, it only took one golden palm to get him out of the picture. He was sent flying and fell twenty meters away from the point of impact. He screamed on the ground in pain when he was not puking blood.

It wasn't much better for the general and the patriarch despite their defense being more solid due to their cultivation, the palms were therefore slowed, but they still left dents on their bodies and damaged their meridians which obstructed Qi flow in their systems causing intolerable pain.

Karma bites, sometimes sooner than people expect. It had been a while since the three feared death.

Master Yi stared down onto the Du patriarch and said coldly: "I don't think there is a place for the Du family in this city." His sharp voice petrified the Du family members, and they were aware the Runemaster could squeeze them like ants.

"Greetings Master Yi! I am not one of them. I am from the Lu family in Ning City! Please don't harm a civilian!" The stern-faced teenager was scared too; he never thought things would go bad with the Du's.

‘Humm he’s pretty talented better than the kid in a coma, but nothing comparing to Ye Wei, and he sounds like a two faced punk!’ Master Yi looked at him with a penetrating stare and thought. “What are you doing here then? Piss off!” He flicked his sleeve intensely at the Lu teen.

The teenager’s talent and gestures were not going to save him today. Master Yi’s invisible strike lashed at him quicker than he could blink, and he didn’t have time to use a defensive stance, all he could do was raising his arms which broke like twigs from the pressure wave. He flew like a small rock skipping a lake’s surface; after bouncing off the ground a few times, he was stopped by a side wall in the arena. He bled from his mouth and laid motionless on the ground twisted like a tangled string puppet.

Only barely conscious, he decided to pretend he was dead and hope someone from his family would save him when the dust settled.

Master Yi’s strange temper horrified everyone at the scene, even the Ye’s. They were now his friends, but they would have to be on their best behavior if they were going to keep contact with this loose cannon.

One minute he was smiling, the next he was breaking bones like it was nothing. Seeing Master Yi’s wrath was more vivid than fearing the Grim Reaper.

Out of the silence came a voice. “Master Yi, this is not fair!” Du Yuan Ming was on his knees, taking what might be his last chance to speak his mind.

Chapter 46: One Point Six Million

Master Yi swung his arm hard and fast. A heavy slam landed on Du Yuan Ming's cheek and sent him flying. The patriarch then landed heavily on the ground.

Three teeth were knocked out of his mouth when he was hit; his mouth was leaking blood and his cheek was swollen to the size of a mandarin. Du Yuan Ming was shaking, but that did not stop him trying to negotiate for his family members' lives. "Mashter Yea thish ish not phare!" It was a chilling scene. Just moments ago he was the bully, and now the Du Patriarch was a convincing victim.

Another swing, this time on the other cheek. The patriarch took flight once again after a loud clap resounded.

"Argoh aoh li..." His speech was no longer audible, nor was his face recognisable as it covered in tears, snot, and blood.

Zhou Wu could see Master Yi was about to lose his temper and deliver the killing blow so he threw himself in front of Du Yuan Ming and begged, "Master Yi! Please show us mercy?! Please give us a reason!"

"Why don't I show you mercy? The real question is why didn't you show mercy?" Master Yi answered calmly. He flicked his sleeve at Zhou Wu, and knocked him to the ground where he belonged.

He would not reason with the unreasonable.

Zhou Wu refused to stay on the floor waiting to be slaughtered. He climbed back up and kneeled towards Master Yi again while both Du Yuan Ming and Dong Ho were rolling on the ground, dazed and confused.

"Master Yi, please listen to me!" It was hard to tell what emotions Zhou Wu was experiencing from his facial expression considering how swollen he was. His trembling voice, though, gave it away.

"You have ten seconds, use it well." Master Yi had complete control over life and death for the moment.

Zhou Wu was just blowing air more than he spoke. "Killing us won't

benefit you or the Ye family! We understand our wrongdoings, and we will do anything to help out the Ye family if you let us live. We have learned our lesson! Furthermore, ending our lives here will anger other branches of the Du family, and cause more bloodshed and hatred. It would not be worth the hassle!”

Master Yi raised an eyebrow, and it took him a few seconds to register the logic coming out of Zhou Wu’s comedically swollen face.

Zhou Wu felt that his speech hit the right note therefore he continued: “We promise, if you let us leave this arena alive, we will never bother the Ye family again. We will help and protect them whenever they need us!”

Master Yi was waiting for a declaration like that. He still looked cold, but it was all an act. He knew being ruthless wouldn’t help the situation, and he did not plan to kill anybody, not today, not any other day. He did what he did because examples needed to be set, and words needed to spread: do not touch the Ye’s. He had experiences with hatred, revenge, and their consequences.

The Runemaster then looked to Ye Zheng Qing, “Patriarch, what do you think?”

Ye Patriarch glared hatefully at Du Yuan Ming, who would need months to recover from the injuries the Runemaster inflicted and said, “It’s up to you Master Yi.”

“If you want satisfaction, I have no problems killing these guys for you, but consider the consequences!” Master Yi said solemnly. He kept his act up as he wanted Ye Zheng Qing to come to the right conclusion by himself.

“Well, looks like they’ve learned their lesson. I will let this go!” The patriarch replied after a long sigh. Though he was glad his family got through this crisis and realised revenge doesn’t solve anything, but he was still heartbroken for Ye Zhong’s sufferings.

‘They better pray for cousin Zhong, If he doesn’t wake up I will still make them pay!’ Ye Wei clenched his fists. He understood and respected his grandfather’s noble decision, though still clouded by anger he was

ready to let it go for now and focus on reviving Ye Zhong.

Master Yi coldly glared at everyone in the Du camp then grunted. "I will let you live, but compensation is in order! For all mess you've made!"

The Du's were slightly relieved knowing they would live to see another day. This was one of the best outcomes they could wish for now that someone who could easily eradicate them was involved.

"So, the Du family is going to pay a million silver to the Ye family, and I expect Dong Ho and Zhou Wu to pay the Ye's three hundred thousand silver each!" Master Yi calmly said, without any hesitation.

Upon hearing the request the trio went from relieved to shocked.

The Ye family was worth around three hundred thousand silver whereas the Du family was worth roughly two million silver. Although the Du's were richer but to gather that much money would not be an easy task. They would need to sell half of the family's assets! And as for Zhou Wu and Dong Ho, three hundred thousand was about three-quarters of their assets.

"Mashter Yee..." Du Yuan Ming's could barely speak, with a sincere look he wanted to ask for a reduction, but the Runemaster's mind was made.

"May I remind you that you hurt my legacy apprentice? You'd normally have to pay with your lives!" Master Yi stared at Du Yuan Ming and said with an angry voice before the patriarch could finish his sentence.

Although the request was outrageous, they were in no position to refuse. They just had to swallow their unwillingness and be grateful for Master Yi's harsh mercy.

"You have three days to deliver the full amount, or else!" Master Yi grunted then turned his face back towards the Ye's.

Master Yi's angry face was branded onto Du Yuan Ming's face. He was not sure if he would be able to come up with that much money on such short notice, but he didn't talk back because of the stress and having a huge headache was better than dying.

The damage done was not what money could compensate, but money talks. The Ye Patriarch was smart enough to know the family would benefit more from the money than from the rest of the Du family from every corner of the land looking for revenge. He took a deep breath and thought, 'I can probably buy some Welkin Leaves for little Zhong with that money!'

"Are you satisfied with this arrangement?" Master Yi asked Ye Zheng Qing.

The Ye Patriarch nodded and said: "Thank you Master Yi! If it wasn't for you, not only wouldn't we get compensation, the Ye family would not be here right now."

"We will be on our way now!" The Du family no longer had business here, they bid farewell and headed back.

"This is over only for now! If my cousin does not recover, I will see you again!" Ye Wei shouted, he was just a student but his words were not to be taken lightly. The Du's trembled and left the arena, nobody dared look back.

It wasn't long ago Du Yuan Ming wanted Ye Zhong dead, now, however, the tables had turned, and he was praying for Ye Zhong instead. "One day we will have satisfaction! You better hope Master Yi does not die before I do..." With each of his arm over a youngster's shoulder, the Du Patriarch mumbled while limping away from the arena.

Back inside the arena, Ye Wei was fighting his resentment. He was calming down slowly, but anger could still be seen in his fiery eyes. Lin Zi Yan gently pat his back after noticing this and said in a soft, comforting voice: "Don't worry, we will find a way to wake him up!"

"Yea!" To Ye Wei, Lin Zi Yan's voice seemed to have a mysterious soothing effect.

The audience left the arena soon after the Du family's departure.

Within days, the news regarding Master Yi's newly acquired legacy apprentice spread between the martial families, some of them sent gifts

and medical supplies to the Ye mansion. Weeks after, most citizens of Green Moon City would learn and reposition the Ye family in their hearts.

Chapter 47: Four Star Student

“Just stay home and rest for the next few days. I will search for Welkin Leaves, you will be the first to know if I get a hold of one.” Master Yi earnestly rubbed Ye Wei’s head, and he could feel his grieving apprentice’s frustration. The Runemaster also understood there was no point training Ye Wei right now because distracted minds don’t process knowledge efficiently; Ye Wei could even hurt himself training if he’s not focused.

“Thank you master!” Ye Wei gratefully answered.

“Ye Wei, I will get out there and also see if I can gather any information regarding Welkin Leaves! Promise me you will take care of yourself!” Lin Zi Yan could see the sorrow in Ye Wei’s frown; it was a heartbreaking sight.

“Yea, thanks so much Zi Yan!” He nodded.

Master Yi and Lin Zi Yan boarded the runicle together and left.

Although they left, what they did today would stay in people’s hearts forever. Nobody in Green Moon City would dare to make a move against them in the foreseeable future!

A while after they left, the Ye’s placed Ye Zhong in a quiet part of the mansion, and he was carefully guarded by a dozen men.

Days after the duel the mansion became a busy place. It was filled with representatives from different martial families wanting to see Ye Wei. As for the hot topic himself, he occupied a room in Ye Zhong’s quarter, and kept his door closed to meditate and cultivate.

In a house on the east side of Green Moon City, a slim built, handsome man was furious. His name was Lu Feng. A few feet away from him there was a bed where the stern-faced teenager was lying, spasming every half a minute or so.

“Imbeciles! You had one job! Damn it! Why was Master Yi there? How did some nobody from the Ye family suddenly became his legacy

apprentice?” Lu Feng threw vases onto the floor, Master Yi’s intervention destroyed his plan completely. He was greatly discouraged, but he had not given up. He went back to the drawing board, ‘No more mistakes! I need their ancestral land!’

Though for now he would have to lay low because their family name was mentioned in the Ye family arena, and even his father feared Master Yi. ‘Ye Wei huh? Just you wait, I will love to see what a little Student can do without your master!’ An insolent smile appeared on Lu Feng’s pale face.

Back at the Ye mansion.

Although Ye Wei was still a child, his position in the Ye family has changed drastically. His uncles and aunts would talk to him before making some decisions regarding the family business, even the patriarch would sometimes consult him.

However, Ye Wei’s mind was elsewhere. He was distracting himself from worrying about his cousin by cultivating. The bullying from his classmates, betrayed by Joe Yan, and more recently the dispute with the Du family... All these little events became motivation for Ye Wei; he hungered for power, he wanted control.

Strength is the most realistic foundation of anything in this dog-eat-dog world. He realised he had been saved by dumb luck too many times, and one day his luck might just run out.

‘My rune consonance is dirt, I have to train as hard as I can! Maybe a miracle will happen... I can’t let Master Yi down. I can imagine teaching someone like me would be easy for him.’

‘I wonder what Zi Yan said or did to change Master Yi’s mind. Anyway, I can’t let either of them down now that everyone knows I am his legacy apprentice!’ While taking a break from self-training, Ye Wei looked back on the past few weeks.

Both Lin Zi Yan and Master Yi did not mention anything to anyone including Ye Wei regarding the actual result of Ye Wei’s rune consonance test. It was safer that way, when Ye Wei was stronger he would figure it

out himself, and furthermore Master Yi thought the lack of confidence was a good trait to have for an apprentice. He wanted to keep it that way. Pride has always driven people away from greatness.

‘I just want to be able to use stances... Why didn’t Master Yi take me to train?’ Ye Wei clenched his fists so hard his knuckles went white and his veins bulged.

Learning about his non-existence rune consonance was more traumatizing than being told about his red Sentient, but one’s attitude can change things. ‘Usually Students can use stances when they reach the seventh star, but maybe I will be able to use stances when I am a Warrior! I just have to train!’ His eyes showed determination.

‘My body feels... stronger. Did Master Yi do something to me other than healing?’ The Runemaster did mend his muscles, bones, and even his Sentient, but what strengthened Ye Wei’s body was the golden flash in his Sentient. Little did Ye Wei know his body was ready for another breakthrough. “Let’s get back to work...” Ye Wei mumbled to himself while carefully reached for a jade pill bottle. He then poured a Fiery Sun Quencher pill onto the middle of his palm.

The Ye Patriarch gave Ye Wei quite a lot of Quencher pills, but none of them could compare to the ones Lin Zi Yan gave him. Ye Wei only consumed one out of the ten Fiery Sun Quencher pills, which aided his breakthrough to two star level days ago.

‘Ye Wei, one small step at a time.’ He took a few slow, deep breaths to clear his mind. When his mind was as calm as a still lake’s surface, he took the pill. It melted in his mouth immediately, and it took only moments before his body started heating up from the surge of energy entering Ye Wei’s bloodstream.

The hot but tender energy circulated through Ye Wei’s veins, and it turned his skin red. From the bloodstream into his muscles and bones, the surge was absorbed almost immediately. His muscles started vibrating at a high frequency as they grew bigger and tougher. There was even a soft metallic glow on his skin where his pressure points lay, as the Quencher

upgraded his body. The vibration quickened and turned into a humming sound. This was a sign of the breakthrough into four star level!

As the humming sounds intensified, so did the glow on his pressure points. The metallic green glowing points suddenly started linking to one another, and Ye Wei's body was slowly covered by a shining green web.

It took Ye Wei around four hours to fully absorb the pill's energy. The green glow on his skin became brighter and clearer and all the muscles and bones in his body were shaking, this was it! His Sentient glowed gold as he became a four star Warrior!

"Did I just became a four star Warrior!?" Ye Wei was euphoric. He opened his eyes and looked at his glowing body.

Normally it takes Students years to reach the four star level, but in the frame of merely few days he advanced three levels! After his next breakthrough, the green web would become an inner skin that glows when Qi flows into it, this reinforcement will make Ye Wei's skin hard as iron.

From the worst in class to a four star Student, at the age of thirteen, Ye Wei had now overtaken most of the Students around his age in his class. There were only seven of his classmates at four star level, and of course Xiao Qi who was a five star Student.

He couldn't yet compare himself to the prodigies in class or the gifted, but he was above average to say the least, and not the piece of trash he once was!

'Falling Star form!' Ye Wei didn't stop after the breakthrough. He adjusted his breathing, and made a complex hand seal then started cultivating again. A will-force vortex formed and grew between his eyebrows, it sucked energy into his body from around him. He was taught a mid Myst form by his family, but a few days ago Ye Wei discovered that the Falling Star form was originally a high Myst form when he was hallucinating.

Ye Wei's improved Falling Star form purifies energy a few times quicker because of its complex routes. It directs the silver primal energy through

one hundred and eight meridians as opposed to the simplified form's thirty-six.

After running the improved Falling Star form the whole night, a vast amount of primal energy had circled Ye Wei's body been purified and now was stored in Ye Wei's dantian ready to be used by the new four star Student.

'I forgot to tell gramps about the improved Falling Star form! I need to do that when I see him, so he can start teaching it to the others!' Ye Wei opened his eyes after a whole day of training. During which many visitors had asked to see him, but were kindly declined by the Ye Patriarch.

Seeing the graceful morning he immediately narrowed his eyes again because of the bright sun. He relaxingly took a deep breath as summer breeze caressed his childish face, after which he stretched his body and felt his newfound strength.

"Things are going well... Hopefully I'll get news from Master Yi or Zi Yan soon..." Ye Wei mumbled to himself, though he was in a good place, he was still bothered by his cousin's condition.

Chapter 48: Proposal

“Knock! Knock!”

The day after his breakthrough, Ye Wei slept very well. The sound of a few quick knocks on the door woke him up early in the morning. “Son, are you awake?” Joe Wan asked soft and gently.

“Mom? What’s going on? Is breakfast ready?” Ye Wei clumsily opened the door and narrowed his eyes to the person who looked like his mom.

Lit by the morning sun, Joe Wan’s kind smile seemed warmer than usual. “You stink, go get changed.” She urged after pulling her son’s robe to her nose, sniffing it then frowning and narrowing her eyes.

“Huh... Why? What’s happening? You look suspiciously excited.” Ye Wei could tell his mom was hiding something from him by looking at her posture and happy face.

“Something great is going to happen! Just shower and get changed already! You are our family’s pride and Master Yi’s legacy apprentice. You have to be presentable at all times!” Though she started to get a little annoyed, the proud mother was still wearing a smile on her face while gently pushed Ye Wei towards the bathroom.

“Okay...” Slightly confused by the intrusion, Ye Wei reluctantly shook his head then took a quick bath.

Ye Wei was a good looking young man, and even more so now that he was in a dashing white robe. “Yea, that’s better!” Joe Wan straightened the creases and made sure the robe was sitting right. She then nodded satisfyingly. ‘I don’t remember him being this tall...’ She was both proud and sad, sad that time flew by and because she knew her son would not need her soon.

“Mom, can you please tell me what’s going on now?”

“We are all waiting for you, just get to the great hall! You will know soon enough.” Joe Wan winked and smiled as she dragged Ye Wei through the corridors.

“The great hall? What’s the occasion?” Obediently he followed his mom’s lead, scratching his head in confusion. It was hard for him to make sense out of anything this morning.

They followed the stone pathway and hallways and ended up at the bottom of a small set of stairs that led to a magnificent building with a symmetrically arched roof. It was supported by thick, sculpted pillars. Ye Wei pulled back his shoulders then followed his mother into the great hall.

The pair of old wooden doors to this spacious great hall were usually closed, and the fact that they were open meant the family had important guests over.

The great hall was crowded and loud for how early it was. The patriarch too was present, chatting with people around him in his designated seat. On his left sat his sons and daughter, they all wore a smile on their faces. On his right sat the guests, all of them were familiar faces.

The ruddy-faced old man with white hair and beard sat directly to Ye Zheng Qing’s left was none other than Joe Zheng Feng, the Joe Patriarch.

The Joe’s and the Ye’s friendship spanned generations. Ye Wei’s mother was from one of the Joe family branches. Ye Wei had seen today’s guests since he was a toddler. However, they stopped associating themselves with the Ye family three months ago when Du Yuan Ming started their campaign.

To the Joe Patriarch’s right sat a boy and a girl, they were both wearing traditional family robes. The boy had a cold look, and he sat as straight as bamboo. This young man’s eyebrows were arching slightly arrogantly, and the confidence and glow in his eyes drew some of the young Ye girls’ attention.

The girl was around Ye Wei’s age, her ear length black hair was luxurious and glossy. The old fashioned family robe contrasted her playful vibe. It was obvious she spent some time getting ready this morning as the womanly features perfectly emphasized her youthful face.

Ye Wei frowned. Under no circumstances will he forget that face, she

insulted him twice at South Star Academy, and in their last encounter he was told: “Dragons don’t associate with snakes.”

“What the hell is she doing here?” Ye Wei mumbled and quietly grunted. He couldn’t bare to look at her for more than a second, so he switched his attention to his family. “Good morning grandpa, dad, uncles, and aunt Jing Jing!”

“You can take a seat little Wei!” The proud smile made Ye Zheng Qing look a decade younger. Ye Wei’s aunt and uncles too smiled genuinely at the young talent. The front door-sill of the mansion had been worn down by all the visiting representatives from the different martial families since the duel. Despite that fact that dealing with an endless line of guests was tiring, the family did gain a lot because of Ye Wei.

Ye Wei saw two empty seats next to his aunt, Jing Jing. He realized that this was the first time he got assigned a seat that was so close to the patriarch.

Ye Jing Jing started talking before Ye Wei could sit down. “Little Wei, have you seen how pretty Joe Yin has gotten? She is going to become a very attractive woman in a few years... And I’ve heard she broke through not so long ago! A six star Student at her age! That’s quite something, right? If I remember correctly, you two were like two peas in a pod a few years ago. Do you two hang out at school?” She looked at Ye Wei and Joe Yin alternately while speaking with a cheeky smile.

“Hang out?” Ye Wei sat down and replied with a sarcastic smile on his face. ‘With her mentality, I should not be associated with her! I am Master Yi’s legacy apprentice, and I will overtake her cultivation soon enough!’ The bitterness soon calmed down. Ye Wei replayed the two insulting encounters with Joe Yin in his head countless times since they happened. Although he decided to move on, the memories still bothered him.

A silhouette of a long-haired, slim girl appeared in Ye Wei’s mind. ‘She has nothing on Zi Yan. Talent, personality, appearance and Zi Yan is always on my side even through the bad times.’ Ye Wei suddenly found

himself comparing Joe Yin to Lin Zi Yan.

Ye Zheng Qing's loud laugh snapped Ye Wei out of his imagination. He was chatting with Joe Zheng Feng about their childhood. The fun, nostalgic episodes of themselves growing up together and more recently how Ye Wei had become the talk of the town caused him to laugh loudly.

It was not an interesting conversation for anyone else but the two patriarchs. "Little Wei, why do you think the Joe's are here with Joe Yin and Joe Pei?" Aunt Jing Jing started talking to Ye Wei quietly.

"Erm... To show off?" Ye Wei answered. It was not a secret that the Joe Patriarch loved bringing the two most talented youngster of his family to social meetings, and that he was very proud of them. He had never come to the Ye Mansion without them on his side after their birth.

Ye Jing Jing laughed: "Ha ha, what bragging rights they have now that you are doing so well! I think they are here for a marriage proposal!" Ye Wei's face turned ashen white, and aunt Jing Jing patted his back when she saw how nervous her nephew became.

"You can't be serious?" Ye Wei looked at Joe Yin only to discover her eyes were fixed on him. Her face immediately turned red as she lowered her head.

Joe Yin was extremely frustrated because she despised Ye Wei ever since she started at South Star Academy. When she learned the news regarding Ye Wei's new master, she spent half a day convincing herself what she heard was not real and the other half cringing in her room. Lin Zi Yan's insult started to make sense, and she regretted her rudeness. 'No wonder why he was hanging out with someone like Lin Zi Yan...'

Ye Jing Jing's assumption was correct. When Joe Patriarch heard Ye Wei had become Master Yi's only legacy apprentice and how the Runemaster fought off the Du family's best men, he immediately wanted to befriend the Ye's again. 'What can link two families together better than a marriage does?' With that in mind, the Joe Patriarch had a brief chat with Joe Yin. They established that the marriage would be great for both her and the family, and in the end having a legacy apprentice son in law was

the same as having Master Yi in his family. And being Master Yi's extended family is what many could only dream about.

Joe Yin knew how much Ye Wei always cared for her and liked her; she believed a sincere apology would put her back into Ye Wei's heart. She was a beautiful girl with a lot of admirers, and she was aware of that, thus assumed Ye Wei would not say no to her.

Although she was intimidated by how close Lin Zi Yan and Ye Wei had become, she was convinced that she could win him back with her charms as spoiled as she was her confidence and arrogance didn't let her think otherwise.

Chapter 49: Decision

Ye Wei chuckled when he saw Joe Yin's fake charming look as he knew better now. 'Does she think I am stupid enough to be manipulated by her?' He was more repulsed than charmed.

"Joe Yin is very mature for her age, and not to mention she's a talented girl! She is already a six star Student, and destined to become a Warrior at a young age!" Joe Wan couldn't take her eyes off the young girl she saw as a good daughter in law.

Nobody could blame her, the idea of having a Warrior daughter in law was very attractive.

Joe Wan was a distant relative of the Joe's visiting today. She heard the rumor of a marriage proposal involving her son and Joe Yin before anyone in the Ye family even knew they were going to have the Joe's as visitors.

She was ecstatic after hearing the news, and Joe Wan would be lying if she said she never thought about her son and Joe Yin marrying each other. Now that the day had arrived she could no longer contain herself.

Ye Wei finally understood why his mom was so excited. He shook his head and decided it was not an enthusiasm he shared. He had no interest in someone like Joe Yin!

Back in the days when they were children, Ye Wei did like Joe Yin, and they were very close to each other. But that was not the case now, not because she wasn't pretty enough, not because she wasn't talented enough to match Master Yi's legacy apprentice, but because he had seen her true colors.

When he was going through hardships in his life, not only Joe Yin was not there to support him, but she looked down on Ye Wei when he was suffering. If that had not changed his opinion about Joe Yin, the recent insult surely did. It was not easy to come to terms with how little he meant to Joe Yin, but Ye Wei dealt with the negativities and saw the bright side of things with a little help from his friends and family.

“Zheng Qing, My brother! Your family is surely doing better with Ye Wei now appointed as Master Yi’s Legacy Apprentice! That is an enviable honor!” Joe Zheng Feng’s energy did not match his white hair and beard. He expressed his heartfelt respect to the Ye Patriarch with great enthusiasm.

“Ah don’t mention it, the young ones in your family are not doing so bad themselves! Joe Pei is what? Twenty-two? It’s admirable that he is already a five star Warrior!” While on the topic Ye Zheng Qing thought about Ye Zhong, and he was slightly saddened. “And you have Joe Yin; she’s a six star Student right?!”

“They are nothing compared to little Wei!” The Joe Patriarch could not stop looking at Ye Wei enviously. He was willing to do a lot of things if in return he could call Master Yi’s Legacy Apprentice his son in law. “By the way! Ye Wei is already thirteen years old if I remember correctly, is he engaged to anyone? It’s about time for him to think about marriage don’t you think?” Joe Zheng Feng sipped his cup of tea acting as casual as he could.

In this age of the Zhou Dynasty sixteen year olds was the time when one was considered an adult. Not only was it common for children to get engaged at the age of twelve and married by sixteen, it was actually encouraged. Humanity always needed new blood to fight the savage beasts and demons.

It has only been a few days, but news of Ye Wei becoming Master Yi’s Legacy Apprentice already spread far and wide. A few families had already come knocking on their doors discussing possibilities of their young daughters getting engaged to Ye Wei. But Ye Zheng Qing turned them all down because he was not satisfied with them.

“I don’t know about that; we have to be very careful who we match Ye Wei with. We don’t want to upset Master Yi. He should have a say about Ye Wei’s future too!” Ye Zheng Qing knew exactly what Joe Zheng Feng was implying as he looked at Joe Yin then replied calmly.

After the Du family started their campaign against the Ye’s, the Joe’s

didn't think twice before cutting all ties with the Ye's. Ye Zheng Qing could understand the reasoning behind it, but he was still not entirely comfortable with how swift the Joe's handled it without even consulting him.

The Ye Patriarch was disappointed in the Joe family, but he was also aware Ye Wei and Joe Yin were close, if Ye Wei wanted to marry her he would not say no.

"Zheng Qing brother! What do you think about Joe Yin? Ye Wei and her basically grew up together, and they understand each other very well I think! What do you say to giving them a life together?" Joe Zheng Feng attempted to hide his nerves; therefore, he suggested the matter in a joking tone.

Knowing the Ye family won't really get anything out of the marriage, Ye Zheng Qing played dumb: "Oh! I've never thought about it!" Not denying the request altogether as he was under the impression Ye Wei might be in favor of this arrangement.

The Ye Patriarch actually had an idea of matching Ye Wei with Joe Yin, but it was put to the side when Ye Wei's embarrassing South Star Academy entry test results got revealed.

With her talent and potential aside, Ye Zheng Qing had always been charmed by Joe Yin's wittiness. The picky patriarch was starting to convince himself that this engagement might actually make Ye Wei happy.

"See? What did I tell you?" Aunt Jing Jing rubbed Ye Wei's head and said in a cheeky voice. "About time if you ask me!"

When Joe Zheng Feng dropped the obvious hint, all of Ye Wei's uncles cast their eyes onto Joe Yin and briefly evaluated, after which they all nodded and smiled satisfyingly at her.

Ye Wei's mom too was wearing a big smile. She was glad that her son could have someone this excellent by his side. Joe Wan was ready to spoil her new daughter in law!

Joe Yin was not stupid, and she slowly curled her lips into the cutest smile she could, seeing the older Ye's eyes were all set on her. She was slightly bothered with how their eyes met hers so she looked at Ye Wei instead, never had she ever been this flustered before. Ye Wei was an unworthy friend in her mind for so long, but now all the negative perceptions about him were replaced by his prestigious position, and Joe Yin started to realize how good looking he was, and how he was actually good enough for her.

All but one person was excited, and he did not get carried away thinking about the engagement, not one strand of Ye Wei's facial muscles were contracted. He was sitting still with an emotionless straight face. Ye Wei knew that if he stayed quiet, then Ye Zheng Qing would seal the deal. "Gramps!" He took a deep breath and stood up.

"Little Wei, what's the matter?" Ye Zheng Qing was slightly confused. Why did his grandson look sad and concerned? 'You won the girl! Why do you look mad? Young kids are so eager these days!'

"Gramps, I do not wish to be engaged just yet..." The calm voice of Ye Wei's provoked everyone in the great hall. They widened their eyes and put them on the Runemaster's apprentice.

'What? They would look good together! And he's thirteen! Hasn't he always been close to Joe Yin?'

The Ye Patriarch's mind went blank for a while he frowned then apologetically waved at the embarrassed Joe Zheng Feng.

Being the patriarch, the news of his engagement request getting declined would make him a laughingstock in Green Moon City. With that in mind, Joe Wan and Ye Jing Jing pulled Ye Wei's robe simultaneously trying to pull him down and make the situation less awkward for everyone in the hall.

Though Ye Wei tried to sound as mild as possible by not directly declining the idea of an engagement, but even still both the guests and the hosts could not help but cringe a little. They all thought the two would make a beautiful match.

Ye Wei ignored his mom and aunt's wishes, and kept standing regardless of how hard they were pulling his robe. 'Not this time...'

He didn't like Joe Yin anymore and was afraid he would have to spend the rest of his life with someone he couldn't trust. Yes, she was gorgeous and talented, but Ye Wei's trust had been shattered from the two times Joe Yin insulted him and left him in the ditch.

It was not hard to figure out Ye Wei and Joe Yin had bad blood now judging by the way he was looking at her. Knowing the deal was probably not going to happen, Joe Zheng Feng failed to keep up the casual act. He stood up and said: "Little Wei, did Joe Yin wrong you somehow? You don't look too happy! If that's the case, we can talk it over! I will be a fair judge and the peace-maker!"

Chapter 50: Cracks

“It has nothing to do with Joe Yin. I’ve just become Master Yi’s apprentice, and I want to focus on learning and training. Getting engaged and married would be distracting right now.” Ye Wei calmly said while looking at Joe Yin, who was looking down to avoid eye contact.

He did not hate Joe Yin, nor did he hold a grudge because of what she said to him. It was her own choice to behave the way she did and Ye Wei just could not trust her. If Joe Yin didn’t really care about him, there was no point for him to invest his emotion in this relationship.

Telling everyone what Joe Yin said to him certainly won’t help, nor would apologies do anything meaningful. Trust is like a mirror; you can fix it if it’s broken, but you can still see the cracks in the reflection.

Ye Wei was over Joe Yin. He did not want to get even with her, and he did not want anything to do with her.

Joe Zheng Feng noticed the difference. Ye Wei used to smile when he called Joe Yin’s name, and it used to sound sweet. The Joe Patriarch knew in his heart that it was over. If Ye Wei doesn’t like Joe Yin anymore, nothing can be done. Even if Ye Zheng Qing doesn’t agree with him, he would respect and follow his grandson’s wish. It won’t be surprising if Ye Wei could find someone better than Joe Yin.

Experiencing humiliation for the first time, Joe Yin widened her beautiful eyes in disbelief. She had never been rejected before!

Since Joe Yin was a little girl, she had countless boys complementing and tailing her every move. She genuinely thought Ye Wei would still dance on her palm if she told him to.

But that was not the case! Joe Yin’s heart ached like it was stabbed and tears built up around her eyes uncontrollably.

“Why?” Joe Yin raised her head to look at Ye Wei then screamed. “Is it because of Lin Zi Yan?”

“Why?” Ye Wei was disgusted with how his discreet response was not

appreciated. He laughed and replied, “Joe Yin, you know better don’t you? You told me we don’t live in the same world. You told me dragons don’t associate with snakes. You said that in front of tens of South Star Students outside Green Phoenix Halls. I forgave you, and now you feel insulted?”

“Joe Yin, don’t be so self-centered! The world does not revolve around you. You are a pretty girl, and because of it there is always a queue of boys following you, doing whatever you tell them to even if you treat them like dirt. That is not me!”

“Do you think I cared about you because I fancied you like those other boys? You could not be more incorrect... I cared about you like you were my sibling, It hurt when I realized you don’t care about me the same way.”

“When I got my Sentient test result back, how did you treat me? You couldn’t get away from me fast enough. You didn’t want to be seen with me for all that time, and now that I am Master Yi’s legacy apprentice you would like to be engaged to me?”

“I don’t want your fake attention! If I get married I want someone who really cares about me! Yes, you are pretty and talented, but my future wife will be a better person than you!”

Ye Wei did not want to make a scene, but when Joe Yin shamelessly talked back, he needed to get that negativity out of his head and draw the line. He also wished Joe Yin would realize how manipulative she was!

These words stabbed Joe Yin’s heart like a sharp knife. Two lines of tears ran down her cheek as Ye Wei finished his rant.

Ye Wei always treated her well and those words did hurt, but Joe Yin was more emotional than she appeared to be...

Memories came crashing like a tide overwhelming Joe Yin’s mind.

They used to play together, train together. Ye Wei always shared toys and treats with Joe Yin. Every time he was nice to her, she would pull the corner of his robe and say “Thank you Wei Wei!”

It was not before now that Joe Yin realized she misunderstood Ye Wei

and that she might be losing someone who genuinely cared for her. She thought Ye Wei was one of her admirers and no matter how far she gets ahead, he would always be there when she turned around. However, what she saw right now was that Ye Wei was further away, at an unreachable place. Joe Yin just wanted him to care for her again, to be reachable again.

“Ye Wei, will you forgive me? I know it’s my fault, I messed up!” In the beginning, Joe Yin felt undignified but Ye Wei’s emotionless face somehow hurt her. She started to understand how much her arrogance and willfulness actually wounded him. “Whatever it may be, I will change it for the better!” Joe Yin said.

Seeing tears streaming down her face, Ye Wei let out a long sigh. “Joe Yin can you stop being so dramatic? You don’t get it... If I was not Master Yi’s legacy apprentice, I really don’t see you apologizing. You’ve hurt me enough, and I am sure we have grown apart now.”

After hearing Ye Wei’s confession, Joe Yin could feel nothing but guilt. She knew if Ye Wei did not become the Runemaster’s apprentice she would probably still be ignoring him, neglecting his feelings. She truly felt guilty and regretful, and she realized the bond they had might never come back.

“I’m sorry, but I have to check on cousin Zhong now, excuse me.” Ye Wei bid his farewell, nodded at Joe Zheng Feng then headed out the door.

If the Runemaster’s legacy apprentice wanted to leave the room nobody could stop him, not even the Joe Patriarch.

A drop of golden sunshine landed on Ye Wei at the hall’s entrance. It lightened up his mood as he stepped away from the drama. He took a deep breath then moved on.

Looking at Ye Wei’s silhouette getting further and further away, Joe Yin felt emptiness and a sense of unease. She would later learn that something irreplaceable just left her life.

There was tension building up inside the great hall as Ye Wei departed.

Joe Zheng Feng felt as if he was sitting on a carpet made of needles. He did not know the relationship between Joe Yin and Ye Wei was this dire. He took a sip from his teacup then said: "Kids always make a huge fuss out of the small things, it should be resolved soon!" He smiled awkwardly as he spoke.

'Ye Wei was Master Yi's only legacy apprentice! If this engagement worked out we'd be protected by the Runemaster, even the Big Three would fear us... How stupid is little Yin? Why didn't she tell me she messed up?!' Joe Patriarch's eyes darted around as his mind wandered.

'Make a fuss out of small things?' Ye Zheng Qing was not happy with how the Joe's reacted during the Du family's campaign, but he was able to be the bigger man because he thought Joe Yin was close to the hero of the hour. But now that did not seem to be the case, there was no reason to be nice to the Joe family.

"Dragons don't associate with snakes, that's a good one!" Ye Zheng Qing said in a cold sarcastic tone.

The Ye Patriarch's words made Joe Zheng Feng feel increasingly embarrassed and uneasy, his face was red as a tomato.

Joe Wan could see how bothered Ye Wei was from his posture. The slow steps he took and how he kept his head down as he walked out. The enthusiasm she had earlier disappeared from her eyes. Although, she is related to the Joe family she is also Ye Wei's mother. The moment her son revealed the details, she forgot about the engagement and started siding with him.

"Joe Patriarch, excuse me!" Ye Yi too wanted to leave the scene. He was there when his son told him about his red Sentient, he knew exactly how vulnerable Ye Wei was. To Ye Yi and Joe Wan, what Joe Yin did to their son was intolerable.

Their son's wish was clear therefore they had no business here. They weren't worried about his future, Master Yi's legacy apprentice deserves better.

Aunt Jing Jing was known for her bad temper and caring for the

youngsters, she stood up and grunted while staring at Joe Yin. It would have been less traumatizing if the insults came from a stranger, but she knew Ye Wei had been looking after and cared for Joe Yin since he could walk. Ye Jing Jing realized she did not pay enough attention to Ye Wei. ‘Only if I had spent more time to talk to him, it could have avoided him getting hurt...’

Following Jing Jing’s lead, the rest of the Ye’s left their seats quietly.

“For goodness sake!” Joe Zheng Feng trembled in anger under the social pressure, he shouted at Joe Yin: “What were you thinking? Apologise to them now!”

“Brother Ye, kids say silly things all the time, don’t take this too personal.” After shouting at Joe Yin, the Joe Patriarch spoke to Ye Zheng Qing in an apologetic tone.

“Don’t be silly, you are thinking too much. Why would I take children’s words seriously?” The Ye Patriarch sounded diplomatic, but his cold facial expression told another story; the recent developments showed him the darker sides of the Joe’s they were too opportunistic and manipulative.

“It’s getting late, and I’m not young and energetic like I used to be! Ye Hai, do you want to show the Joe’s the way out?” The Ye Patriarch stood up and faked a yawn.

“Sure, dad!”

Ye Hai stood up, “Uncle Joe, this way.” He said indifferently.

‘Drop the act...’ Joe Zheng Feng felt extremely bitter, not only did the Joe’s get embarrassed from the proposal. He was pretty sure the Ye family wouldn’t be interested in doing any kind of business with him.

A relationship that spanned through generations came to an end today. When the words from today spread, the Joe’s will become the laughingstock of the city.

Chapter 51: Return To South Star

Ye Hai sullenly escorted the Joe's out of the mansion.

Joe Yin emotionlessly followed while staring at the floor as her mind wandered.

Anger? Yes, but here was no sign of tiredness on Ye Zheng Qing's face as he conversed with his sons and daughter.

"When The Du's were at war with us, the Joe family did not help us one bit. It is understandable they don't want trouble with the Big Three..." The patriarch was an understanding man. "But it's obvious they just want to use little Wei for their own advantage; that is just disrespectful!"

"And that girl! She abandoned my grandson when he was going through hard times! I can't imagine what kind of parents would put values like that in their kids head?!" Ye Zheng Qing tightened his grip as he exclaimed, the jade teacup in his hand turned into dust.

Ye Hai let out a long, disappointed sigh and said, "That is pretty cold-blooded, even for a kid!"

"From now on our family will not be affiliated with the Joe family!" Ye Zheng Qing said with determination.

"Dragons don't associate with snakes? Who the hell did she think she was?" Said the angry aunt, Ye Jing Jing, who was bold enough to stand up against the Du family, if Joe Yin didn't look so regretful, she would have slapped her right in the face.

"Terminate all the deals we have with the Joe's!" With compensation on the way and their newfound reputation, Ye Zheng Qing did not need the Joe's anymore; he would rather work with people he trusted.

Outside Ye Zhong's room stood Ye Wei looking at the clear blue sky.

"I will prove myself with actions. I'm not going to let my rune consonance drag me down! If Master Yi thinks I am good enough to be his apprentice, then there must be a way for me to improve. I will shut everyone up, and all the people who insulted me will be proven wrong!"

The countless insults Ye Wei received throughout the three years at South Star Academy strengthened his mind enormously. He was a lot more mature than the other kids of his age due to the constant bullying.

His youthful face looked incredibly confident. Apart from getting accepted by Master Yi, Ye Wei's quick progress also played an important role in him improving his self-esteem. Being a four star Student was not that impressive, but his fast speed of improvement due to the original Falling Star form he discovered and the Fiery Sun Quencher pills he was given, Ye Wei had an advantage over others his age.

On top of that, the dense cosmic energy Ye Wei received while refining the White Tiger's Assault gave him strength that other four star Students could not match. Now, he could probably take down an ordinary five star Student in real combat.

In the next few days, Ye Wei trained non-stop next door to his cousin's sick bed; Ye Zheng Qing arranged a three days feast which welcomed guests to celebrate with them the end of their family's crisis and Ye Wei becoming Master Yi's legacy apprentice.

While the big families were there feasting in the mansion, the Ye's took the chance to ask if any of the guests knew anybody who might have Welkin Leaves in their possession. But despite their effort, they got no news regarding the rare herb.

The school holiday passed by in a flash and before packing up for the return to South Star Academy Ye Wei passed the original Falling Star form to the Ye Patriarch.

The patriarch was stunned by Ye Wei's discovery. Although they were struck by the Du family, the Ye family obtained more than a million silver and gained a high Myst level formula. With that kind of resource, the family would soon become drastically stronger.

When Ye Wei was asked how he got his hands on the perfect Falling Star form, he mentioned Master Yi's name which stopped Ye Zheng Qing from questioning further.

There was another thing Ye Wei wanted to do before leaving.

“Cousin Zhong... I have to return to South Star Academy soon.” He stood in Ye Zhong’s room with a heavy heart. Ye Wei carefully wiped the sweat off Ye Zhong’s pale face with a warm towel. Scenes of the cousins’ time together kept replaying in his head as he took care of the unconscious patient.

“I’m not strong enough right now, but when I become a Runemaster, I will take this matter into my own hands, and you will be avenged!” Ye Wei swore with a fiery spirit.

“Master Yi is searching for Welkin Leaves, and if anyone in Green Moon City has the herb, I’m sure master will retrieve it for us. Although he looks sketchy and dirty, he is a strong man who we can trust.” Ye Wei spoke solemnly, hoping his cousin could somehow hear him.

“It’s late; I should get going.” There was a hint of tears in Ye Wei’s eyes. He adjusted and straightened Ye Zhong’s blanket and left the room with his head lowered.

‘Unfortunately, obtaining them was easier said than done, Welkin leaves are simply too rare. Their rarity means Master Yi’s influence would not make the search any easier. Even if he managed to get ahold of some and wake up cousin Zhong, a full recovery of his Sentient is not guaranteed. If his Sentient didn’t fully recover would cousin Zhong be able to accept that...’ Ye Wei was distracted by the countless possibilities.

“I will do everything I can to help your recovery cousin Zhong, and I will find a way to fix your Sentient!” Ye Wei looked at Ye Zhong as he mumbled and closed the door.

Ye Wei then returned to his room to finish packing. With the help of some guards, he loaded his luggage into the horse carriage and left for South Star Academy soon after.

Ye Zheng Qing wanted Ye Wei to take the quicker and more comfortable beast carriage back to school because a legacy apprentice deserved a bit of luxury, especially now that Ye family was financially secure. The Ye Patriarch could afford to get Ye Wei a new beast carriage.

However, Ye Wei turned it down. He didn’t want to be too flashy and

draw too much attention, so he opted for an ordinary horse carriage.

South Star Academy students were mostly from ordinary families. Martial families preferred home education as they usually had an established system to train the youngsters, unless it was an unusual circumstance.

In Ye Wei's case, he had to go to South Star Academy because the Ye family's system would not work on someone with a red Sentient; for Joe Yin, the Joe family's system was too rough and physical for girls.

And all the other marital families' children and talented South Star students were there under the same instruction: "Learn the Pole Star Finger!".

Only three powers had possession of high level Myst stance in Green Moon City; they were the City Lord, Master Yi, and South Star Academy.

The City Lord's Myst stance was passed down from the Zhou Dynasty under the strict order directly from the royal family that it shall never be taught to outsiders; Master Yi's Myst stance was passed down from the Holy Conservatory, and he would only teach it to his legacy apprentice.

The only way for a civilian to learn a Myst stance was through South Star Academy. The founder of South Star created the stance in his youth. Every top ranked students had one chance to challenge the Emerald Flaming Maze, and the stance was passed down to whoever could get through the gauntlet perfectly. In the recent decades only a handful of student overcame the challenge and got their hands on this powerful stance.

"Thank you! You can just drop me off here!" Ye Wei got off the carriage and gave the coachman a nice handful of silver.

"Greatly appreciated!" The coachman smiled and respectfully bowed towards Ye Wei. With the generous tip, he would buy a bottle of fine rice wine at The Drunken Hermit when he got off work. 'Unbelievable! Even with this kind of fame, little Wei is still so caring and kind!' The Ye family's uprising made the Ye mansion as busy as a marketplace, to the point where people from martial families were even starting to bribe the

Ye's servants for inside information.

The students at South Star had not seen each other for a whole week, and a lot of them were excited to see each other again, so they had stayed at the school gate to chat and catch up.

Ye Wei was only carrying two hand size suitcases, which allowed him to slip through groups of students without anyone noticing. He then followed the crowded path back to his room.

All classes had a mandatory meeting on the evening students return from their break. Ye Wei's plan was to finish unpacking his room and tidy up before heading to the meeting; however, after seeing the state of his room, his plans were going to have to change. As he stepped foot through the door and looked around him, he became furious. His fists were clenched, and his knuckles cracked.

The table was in pieces, and the floor was covered by ripped clothes. His blanket and bed stank pungently of piss.

'Who did this!?' Ye Wei said fumingly.

'Was it Xiao Qi?' The first person he suspected was the infamous class bully. 'No... no, It can't be him, he stopped being irritating to me ever since I answered those questions correctly in Yi Yan's lecture. He doesn't have the courage to come after me. But I don't see who else would do it!' He was convinced Xiao Qi was guilty, or at least had something to do with the vandalism.

'Whoever you are, I will make you pay!' Ye Wei was not in the best mood. If he wanted it his way, he would have stayed by Ye Zhong's side until he heard from Master Yi, Lin Zi Yan, or anyone to bring news about the Welkin Leaves.

Ye Wei took a deep breath then left his room.

Ye Wei slammed the classroom door open only to find out Xiao Qi was not there.

The students from martial families were wealthy, and they usually went out together for food at a random restaurant close to the academy,

whereas the students from ordinary families would stay in the classroom and chat.

With both his parents working at the academy as senior instructors, Xiao Qi was probably enjoying a cage of dim sum with his friends.

Chapter 52: Conflict

“What now?” The less privileged students in the classroom had their eyes set on Ye Wei, some of them were happy for him, but most of them were rejoicing when they heard of his misfortune and then were jealous of his recent fame.

Ye Wei was the punching bag of junior class three, whoever was having a bad day would lash out at him verbally and sometimes even physically. Being at the bottom of the class, that kind of bullying was not justified, but it was common; his classmates would look the other way and talk about it during breaks.

Who would have thought that this one star Student had the potential to become a Runemaster? Some of Ye Wei’s classmates were happy that he finally got out of the toxic cycle of being bullied while the others were envious that Lin Zi Yan was on his side since he showcased his newfound talent. Some people can’t be happy about the good fortune of others.

The rest just liked the drama. They looked forward to what the tutor had to say about how Ye Wei skipped school for three days in a row, and if Du Ming Ze was going to continue bullying him now that school was starting again.

At this time, only the upper class and martial families had heard about what happened in the Ye family arena a few days ago. The vast majority of South Star students were oblivious of the duel, and how even the Du Patriarch was afraid to cross Ye Wei now. They thought the Du family was still what they were before the break.

“Ye Wei skipped school three days in a row! Xiao Qi is definitely going to bring it up during the class meeting and make it sound worse than it is. I wonder what his punishment will be!”

“But he is Lin Zi Yan’s pet now. I don’t think he will be punished that much. He will probably just get detention or something like that. Du Ming Ze might give him a rough time though!”

“He brought it onto himself, all he did was answered a couple of

questions correctly. Do you really think he will get lucky again? The monthly assessment is in two weeks, and he is still a one star Student! Haha! I look forward to seeing him getting the worst grade again!”

The quiet gossip continued as the class was hesitant to tease him openly, but they couldn't wait to see how the drama was going to unfold and laugh at him when everything goes south.

Cao Ning waved, “Ye Wei! Come over here!” He was worried sick. Having sat next to Ye Wei in class for years, he was one of the few real friends Ye Wei had.

When Du Ming Ze and his little gang raided Ye Wei's room, Cao Ning was close by Ye Wei's dormitory, so he saw them entering Ye Wei's room and heard the noise they made.

“What's up?” Ye Wei hid his anger and replied with a casual smile. He walked to his seat and sat himself down, slightly confused about Cao Ning's anxious tone. Ye Wei saw Cao Ning as his closest friend in class; he was not going to let his negative emotions affect their friendship.

“How can you be smiling?” Cao Ning covered his earnest face with his hand frustrated by Ye Wei's carefree attitude.

“What's up? We're having a class meeting soon that's what!” Cao Ning was struggling to empathize with Ye Wei as he continued to rant in a serious tone, “You know about our class tutor's temper! You skipped school without telling anyone, three whole days! Do you think he will let you off?”

Cao Ning was a bit grouchy from having nothing but studying and training on his schedule for the past few days. His eyes were slightly bloodshot from the lack of sleep. “The monthly assessment is in two weeks, and you're skipping school while we were preparing for it during class! Miss Zi Yan saw something in you from what I could see... Aren't you afraid to let her down? What would she think if you came in last again.”

““Oh! About that...” Ye Wei rubbed his nose and replied with an awkward smile. He had completely forgotten about it.

The assessment was split into three parts. Part one was a rune knowledge test. Part two was a cultivation level check, and part three was a real combat test. Thinking about it, Ye Wei was not worried about any aspects of the assessment. He passed Master Yi's written exam with a perfect score. He couldn't yet compete with the other gifted kids of his age due to his late start, but his four star cultivation was more than impressive when stacked up against everyone else in his class. Furthermore, Ye Wei's body had been strengthened by cosmic energy, the high Myst level cultivation formula, and Fiery Sun Quencher pills. He didn't know it yet, but he could probably beat a five star Student in a duel.

Cao Ning patted Ye Wei's shoulder and said, "It is pretty tight, but you still have two weeks, you should start caring about it! Miss Zi Yan knows about your situation. I don't think she expects you to do that well, but at least don't come in last. You could really use a teacher on your side right now!" Ye Wei had a moment of clarity, but Cao Ning misinterpreted his facial expression as a blank out due to panic.

"Coming in last?" Ye Wei smiled bitterly. He was agitated by the frustrating memories of coming last throughout the three years he was at South Star Academy. 'It won't happen again...' He thought.

"And..." Cao Ning scanned the room to make sure nobody was eavesdropping as he pulled Ye Wei close to him then continued in a whisper, "You have to avoid Du Ming Ze at all costs. He came looking for you with a gang of friends from his senior class. I don't think they had good intentions. When they couldn't find you in our classroom, he went to your room!" The worry on Cao Ning's face looked sincere.

In Cao Ning's mind, he thought that for Ye Wei neither how well he did in the assessment or minimizing his punishment was an urgent matter compared to his dispute with Du Ming Ze. Because this dispute could potentially destroy his social life at South Star and get him severely hurt.

"If you can't stand it, just head home. You can train with your family instead where you will be safe!" Cao Ning bit his lips as he suggested. He didn't want anything bad to happen to Ye Wei. The two were each other's only real friends in South Star Academy, and Cao Ning could not help

solve this problem, therefore, he wanted to at least try to persuade him.

“Du Ming Ze?” Ye Wei asked with a cold glare. Having to think about the Du’s, Ye Wei started to get fired up. ‘A Du would have the guts...’

“But Xiao Qi volunteered to help; he led them to your room!” Cao Ning continued whispering.

“Xiao Qi and Du Ming Ze... I see!” All the puzzle pieces suddenly started to come together. ‘The coward found a bully to help him!’

Right as Cao Ning was going to tell Ye Wei not to cause any trouble, the classroom door was kicked open. Xiao Qi stomped in with a swagger and the gossip instantly died down while the brown-nosers greeted him. Being the number one student of the class gained him some respect from both teachers and students. He was often assigned to help discipline the class during breaks and therefore every student feared and obeyed him.

Since Ye Wei’s show of talent, the atmosphere in junior three had changed slightly. The class feared his strength more than they respected him as a person. They would not side with Xiao Qi if he decided to say or do anything to Ye Wei.

“Ye Wei!” Xiao Qi scanned the whole classroom with his eyes, feeling superior as his classmates nodded at him and avoiding eye contact out of fear. He was going to start bullying again thinking Du Ming Ze was on his side.

“Only you are dumb enough to provoke Du Ming Ze. How do you like the new decor?” Xiao Qi said in a sadistic tone as he walked towards Ye Wei’s seat. “And, you are also the only person dumb enough to skip school three days in a row! How dare you disrespect our teachers and the school rules!”

“As the prefect, I will make sure our tutor hears about this!” Xiao Qi stood next to Ye Wei, looked down at him and chuckling.

Ye Wei frowned, he was finding it hard to control the anger within as he darted his angry eyes on Xiao Qi. The moment before Ye Wei was going to stand up, Cao Ning pulled his sleeve and tried to convey to him the

message, 'Without Miss Zi Yan in the classroom, you are in no position to challenge Xiao Qi! He is a five star Student! Ye Wei you rascal!'

"It will be fine!" Said Ye Wei as he shook Cao Ning's hand off his sleeve. He patted Cao Ning's shoulder and slowly stood up to stare Xiao Qi straight in the eyes.

"Xiao Qi, did you lead Du Ming Ze and his dogs to trash my room?" Ye Wei asked calmly in an interrogative tone.

"As I said, you deserved it. You shouldn't have offended Du Ming Ze!" Xiao Qi grunted coldly and answered by not denying it.

The tension built up as the pair refused to stop staring at each other. The whole class was nervous, and they didn't know who to root for. They didn't know if they should notify the teachers either. The class prefect nor the potential Runemaster wanted to back down.

"Ye Wei has changed a lot... Nobody talks to Xiao Qi like that! It would be foolish if he started a fight though, his runic knowledge won't do him any good in a fist fight!"

"Xiao Qi wouldn't start a fight, right? In the case, Ye Wei does become a Runemaster in the future... And Miss Zi Yan might have something to say about it too!"

"Have you forgotten about Du Ming Ze? He is from one of the Big Three and seemed to be pretty close to Xiao Qi from the last time he came to our classroom."

The gossip started again as the room was becoming too quiet and the atmosphere got heavier.

Chapter 53: Martial Families

“Just answer me, did you lead Du Ming Ze to my room?” Ye Wei’s glare was intense and cold as he narrowed his eyes then slowly clenched his fists. He looked ready to fight.

“Oh, what is this? Do you want to fight me?” Xiao Qi saw Ye Wei’s fists and said jokingly in a mocking tone. He was not afraid of a one star Student who answered a few of questions correctly during class. “You assume correctly! I did lead Du Ming Ze to trash your room! You’re lucky you weren’t there, otherwise you too would have been trashed!”

There were not a lot of things Xiao Qi enjoyed more than mouthing off to people inferior to himself.

“What if I told you that it was me who led them there? Will you do something with those fists, or are they just for show?” Xiao Qi’s arrogant smile grew bigger.

“Ye Wei don’t let your emotions get the better of you.” Cao Ning was afraid that Ye Wei was going to fall for the insults and taunts, and he attempted to hold him back again.

If Ye Wei started the fight, Xiao Qi would be blameless and get off the hook by claiming he fought in self-defense.

Cao Ning reached for Ye Wei’s arm but he grabbed nothing but air, and before he could finish his sentence Ye Wei had already launched himself towards Xiao Qi.

“Sh*t!” Cao Ning’s face turned pale, and he could do nothing but watch.

The class was staring at Ye Wei surprised that he would fall for Xiao Qi’s taunts, and they were even more surprised by his decision to fight someone much stronger than he was.

“Ha, I was afraid you would never come at me!” Xiao Qi’s lips curled into a prideful sneer. He took a step forward with a heavy stomp and channeled his Qi. A green metallic glow shone under his skin as his Qi flowed through, hardening his body from head to toe.

Xiao Qi threw a punch, and it cut through the air creating a shrill piercing sound.

A small whirlwind violently spread throughout the whole room from Xiao Qi's punch. The pressure tilted the tables and pushed over the books set atop.

Xiao Qi did not hold anything back; he showed off his full strength, the strength of the five star Student that junior three feared.

Cao Ning's eyes were closed. He shut his eyelids the moment Xiao Qi threw the punch as he did not want to see his best friend get hurt and suffer.

The rest of the class too simultaneously looked away. They were aware that Xiao Qi mercilessly gave this punch his all and that it was going to break some bones. They thought there was nothing Ye Wei could do to avoid the bloodshed from happening, therefore, they looked away.

On the other hand, there was no trace of panic on Ye Wei's face. He was terrifyingly calm. He saw through the mind games Xiao Qi tried to play and was ready to confront him physically and mentally.

Ye Wei channeled his Qi, and his bones and muscles surged with strength. With the momentum of his whole body, he answered Xiao Qi's strike with a punch of his own.

Ye Wei's Qi was condensed from cosmic energy, the Fiery Sun Quencher pill, and that golden flash in his Sentient; his fist and the rest of his skin were covered in a soft fire red glow decorated by dots of golden light where his meridian lay.

The red fist and the green fist met in mid-air, and they collided together like two pieces of solid steel. The collision created a shower of sparks and a force wave that knocked over all tables and chairs within two meters from the point of impact.

"How is this possible?!" Xiao Qi's full-powered punch was stopped by Ye Wei's counterpunch, neither of them gaining an inch. He stared at Ye Wei's fist, and his eyes widened in shock. 'When did this idiot become

this strong?!

“I thought you were the strongest in our class?” While holding his fist against Xiao Qi’s, Ye Wei grunted. His right fist traveled from his waist to his opponent’s abdomen at lightning like speed akin to a venomous snake striking its prey.

Xiao Qi’s body bent backwards, and his organs were pressed together by Ye Wei’s powerful right hook. Within seconds, he was overwhelmed by pain. Stomach acid gushed out from Xiao Qi’s mouth, and his eyes widened as Ye Wei’s fist dug deeper into his abdomen.

Xiao Qi’s strength was drained by the pain. His punch weakened, and his fist dropped. He just couldn’t hold his arm up.

Ye Wei seized the window of opportunity as he followed through with a left punch and landed it on Xiao Qi’s jaw. The left cross knocked Xiao Qi over, and his body fell on and smashed the chair behind him.

After the noise had died down, everyone turned their heads back to see the damage Xiao Qi did, only to find him on the ground! They froze in shock with their eyes and mouths wide open. ‘What just happened? What is Xiao Qi doing on the floor?’

The surprise and confusion on everyone’s faces couldn’t even come close to how startles Xiao Qi felt. He could not believe he was knocked down by this one star Student. With red eyes, Xiao Qi stared at Ye Wei like a bloodthirsty beast hunting his prey as he shouted, “Ye Wei! I will kill you!”

Xiao Qi hair was disheveled, and his jaw was bruised. He struggled to get up from the floor like a newborn deer. ‘I was careless! I am the strongest student in junior three, and he is just a one star rubbish!’ Fuming in shame and anger, Xiao Qi was deep in denial. He refused to think about what just happened and instead gave himself an excuse.

‘He humiliated me with a sucker punch in front of everyone!’ The thought rapidly grew in Xiao Qi’s head as he completely lost his cool. He roared with rage then dashed at Ye Wei. Xiao Qi needed to prove to everyone, and himself, that he was the best in class.

Ye Wei just calmly stood still and curled his lips into a smile. He was more entertained than threatened by the person in front of him who looked like an angry clown.

Though Ye Wei was irritated by Xiao Qi's attitude, he wanted to get even and teach the corrupt class prefect a lesson about respect. He slowly clenched his fist, 'In the past Xiao Qi has abused his power to bully others, and it had gotten way of control; this time he tagged along with Du Ming Ze to trash my room. If I don't stop him what's next? And who will be the victim?' The more Ye Wei thought about it, the angrier he got.

"Xiao Qi! Are you out of your mind?" While Xiao Qi was dashing towards Ye Wei, three well-dressed teenagers entered the classroom.

These junior three students were from martial families. Two of them were four star Students, and the last one was a three star Student.

They saw the mess as they stepped into the classroom, and the moment they identified who the brawlers were they shouted at Xiao Qi simultaneously. "Xiao Qi, who do you think you are? You have no idea who are you messing with!" The three teenagers were fully aware of Ye Wei's relationship with Master Yi.

Chapter 54: Punishment

The three teenagers' screams startled Xiao Qi, and before he knew it the three ran in front of Ye Wei shielding him from Xiao Qi.

The trio nodded at Ye Wei, signaling that they were friends not foes. They then turned to stare at Xiao Qi and coldly shouted, "Don't worry, we won't let Xiao Qi touch a hair on your head!"

These three were talented individuals, and they were in junior three only because of their sloppiness and that they were too lazy to train. Although they weren't the top students of the class, their family backgrounds made their classmates respect them. They were close to Xiao Qi and often hung out together.

The three martial family teenagers on their own were a little social group. There was an aura of snobbiness around them. It's not that they were bad people, but they just didn't think they would gain anything by associating with ordinary students, nor did they see a point hanging out with Ye Wei before now because of his horrible red Sentient.

Seeing that those three were protecting Ye Wei, the class was again confused. They could not figure out what happened to cause the three teenagers to not side with their friend, but instead defend Ye Wei.

But for the trio, it was clear. Unlike the others in junior three, they received the information regarding the family showdown very shortly after it happened. As a matter of fact, they were just discussing how to befriend Master Yi's new legacy apprentice. Now that Xiao Qi served this opportunity on a silver platter to them there was no way the trio would let this chance slip by.

"What? You three are going to fight me too?" Xiao Qi's bloodshot eyes were fixed on the trio who stood in front of Ye Wei and sternly shouted, "If you three do not already know, Ye Wei has offended Du Ming Ze, from the Du family! You don't want them after you!"

After Xiao Qi's statement, the trio showed no sign of standing down. Not aware there were bigger things in play, Xiao Qi was clouded by

frustration wondering why they would help Ye Wei.

‘These guys are from martial families, but none of them are half as well established as the Du family, what the hell has gotten into them?’

“The Du family? Haha.” The trio looked at each other then contemptuously sneered at Xiao Qi’s naivety and lack of exposure. To them, the Du family were the losers who got humiliated by Master Yi during a failed plot against the Ye’s, and after which they were forced to pay a million silver in compensation as an apology.

“Xiao Qi, don’t try to threaten us with Du Ming Ze’s name. Even if he personally came here, we would still stand our ground! We won’t let anyone touch a hair on Ye Wei’s head!” They were acting as guardian like as they could.

Seeing the scene, Ye Wei shook his head reluctantly. He was aware what the trio’s real intentions were.

Although Ye Wei was slightly put off by the intentions of this unnecessary attempt of intervention, he didn’t say anything as one should never decline help.

“You guys! You will regret this!” Xiao Qi clenched his fists, as he coldly stared at the trio, then fixed his eyes on Ye Wei as he made his threatening speech.

Protected by three determined bodyguards, Xiao Qi could not do anything to Ye Wei but intimidate him.

“Skipping school three days in a row, starting fights in the classroom, and harming a student’s body! These are flagrant violations of school rules! When the tutors get here, I will see how you three can protect this idiot!” Xiao Qi grunted and said as he rubbed his stomach, it was still hurting from their exchange of blows.

After looking around at the messy classroom, Xiao Qi limped back to his seat, sat down, and hoped the class tutor would arrive soon.

“Ye Wei! Are you hurt?” The trio had better things to worry about, they ignored Xiao Qi’s threat and continued fawning over Master Yi’s legacy

apprentice. They knew nobody, not even the principle, would do anything to the Runemaster or his associates.

“I am fine. Thanks for the help!” Ye Wei shook his head to signal he was fine, and politely expressed his gratitude although he knew they were doing it for potential personal gain.

Seeing that Ye Wei did not talk more, the trio was afraid they were intruding on his personal space, therefore they bowed then quietly went to their seats.

“Hey, I am fine! I’m strong enough now. I don’t start fights, but I am not afraid to confront unfairness!” Ye Wei could see his best friend was still trembling, so he patted Cao Ning’s shoulder and spoke in a comforting manner.

Cao Ning was by no means untalented. He was a three star Student, and his civilian family upbringing made him an honest boy, but also a timid one.

This did not escape the martial family boys as they looked at each other. It seemed that if they wanted to be close to Ye Wei, they might have to befriend Cao Ning too.

“Yea!” Cao Ning nodded then replied. He was calmed by Ye Wei’s trustworthy aura, and he could sense there was something different about his best friend.

It wasn’t snobbiness from showing off his potential to become a Runemaster or Miss Zi Yan’s high regards. It was a deeper temperament; a transformation.

Time passed, and the sky darkened. Junior three’s classroom was almost full. The mess made earlier remained, and Xiao Qi pressured his classmates not to touch a thing so he could present it as an evidence of Ye Wei’s alleged crimes.

“The class will be a witness to you skipping school and starting a fight. This mess will be the proof of your violent acts! You can get severely punished for violating either of these rules, and I will see if you can keep

calm when our tutor comes!” Xiao Qi’s face was ashen while as he clenched his fist tight. He spoke to the class while staring at Ye Wei, who was sitting relaxed.

The class was casually looking at Ye Wei as they spoke about what happened in the classroom earlier. They too were curious about how their tutor was going to handle this outlaw.

There had been a lot of strange events happening today in junior three’s classroom. First it was Ye Wei actually standing up against Xiao Qi and knocking him to the ground. Secondly, the martial family boys sided with Ye Wei instead of their usual ally. The class knew way too little to make sense out of these episodes!

They anticipated an explanation for when the tutor confronted all the participants of the fight that happened earlier. Usually, the tutor would arrive in the classroom before the scheduled meeting starts to catch up with the students.

However, it was not before an hour past the scheduled time before the sweaty tutor showed up panting. He was wearing the standard issue black robe and looked suspiciously concerned about something.

This was the moment the class has been waiting for! As the chubby tutor entered, thirty pairs of eyes immediately set on him.

Chapter 55: Gifted

“Huh?” Before the tutor’s eyes was a messy, hardly recognizable classroom. It was obvious a fight took place not long ago. He noticed that he was the focus of the whole class’ eyes. He slightly frowned letting the class know he was displeased.

“The Tutor is going to lose it!”

‘Oh god, Xiao Qi is going to make it sound way worse than it really was. Ye Wei is in deep trouble!’ The students thought while looking at their tutor’s ashen face, but they were all too timid to speak up.

“Ha! Nobody can help you this time Ye Wei!” Xiao Qi was glad to see the tutor’s angry face, thinking Ye Wei’s punishment would be exceptionally heavy.

Seeing that the tutor was going to ask who was responsible for the mess, Xiao Qi adjusted his shirt and rehearsed the allegations in his head. He was ready to report Ye Wei’s crimes in detail, that may not be completely accurate.

Xiao Qi was impatiently waiting but the tutor did not ask anything about the mess. The class tutor’s eyes stayed on the broken tables and chairs for merely a second before he shifted his attention to Ye Wei.

The chubby tutor respectfully looked at Ye Wei and approvingly nodded.

He did not like the state of the room and he did not know Ye Wei was responsible for it. But he knew he was looking at Master Yi’s legacy apprentice and could not wait to show respect.

The reason why he was late to the class meeting was that he was held up in another meeting, a meeting with the administrators of South Star Academy. There he learned that Ye Wei had been recruited by the renowned Runemaster, Master Yi.

“Tutor!” Xiao Qi was tired of waiting for the tutor to ask the question, so he enthusiastically stood up while coldly staring at Ye Wei.

“Not only did Ye Wei defiantly skip school for three days in a row,

but he attacked me from my blind spot with a sucker punch in this very room! He broke the school rules! Please serve justice!”

“The whole class is my alibi!” With his twisted sense of right and wrong, Xiao Qi presented his claims. His stomach was still hurting, but his mind felt eased. He was sure the tutor would avenge him swiftly and forcefully.

The tutor of junior three was known to be bad tempered. In the past, even when Xiao Qi and the martial boys broke a less serious school rule, this man would still punish them as if they committed serious offences. He did this to make an example of them and to make sure they didn’t do it again.

“Skipping school? And he attacked you?” The tutor confusingly looked at Xiao Qi, his eyebrows curled up as he frowned. Then he madly replied to Xiao Qi with a few questions, “Xiao Qi, you are the strongest student in this class, the one and only five star Student! And Ye Wei? Who doesn’t know that he is a one star Student? He attacked you?”

“You have let me down!”

“You insult me with your lies! Don’t you have better things to spend your time on, other than lying?”

The tutor’s scolding echoed in the classroom and it startled Xiao Qi and the rest of the class. They were very confused why the tutor would take Ye Wei’s side before further investigation. They all knew that Ye Wei skipped school for three days. This favoritism was very much uncalled for.

Xiao Qi couldn’t believe the strict class tutor favored Ye Wei, he paused his pursuit.

“But even if he couldn’t or didn’t attack me, he still skipped school for three whole days! If you don’t believe me, you can ask the substitute teacher!” Xiao Qi grinded his teeth after he spoke as he was not comfortable being the victim of unfair treatment.

The day was getting weirder and weirder for everyone, they just didn’t

understand why everyone seemed to be favouring Ye Wei!

Xiao Qi's mind was full of resentment and unwillingness. He couldn't let this go without making Ye Wei suffer! 'The evidence is right here! The proof of Ye Wei's offence was the classroom, itself! Even if the tutor favoured Ye Wei, there is no escape for this class skipping rascal.'

"The act of skipping school for three days is not always against the rules now, is it? The tutor calmly stared at Xiao Qi as his face darkened.

He was annoyed by Xiao Qi. 'Ye Wei is Master Yi's one and only legacy apprentice, and even people as high up as the principle and the vice principal have to pay Master Yi respect!'

'Xiao Qi you little brat, why would I look for trouble on your behalf?'

As the tutor's mind wandered, the class was still completely lost while trying to understand the situation. It was a written rule that students at South Star Academy are not allowed to skip school but Ye Wei skipped three days. Ye Wei had been bullied in the past, but that should not exclude him from being the subject of the school's discipline policies!

Xiao Qi looked irritated and the rest of the class looked puzzled. Everyone that is, but the three martial family boys, they were secretly chuckling as they could guess why the tutor was behaving this way. 'Haha, why would a junior class tutor dare punish Master Yi's apprentice? No tutors are in the position to do so!'

"South Star Academy has strict rules against class skipping, but that only applies to students in junior, intermediate, and senior class!"

"The school board has made a decision to reassign Ye Wei to the class of the gifted!" The tutor briefly gave Xiao Qi a cold look, then turned to Ye Wei and said with a friendly tone, "Let's all congratulate Ye Wei"

"What!?"

"Ye Wei? Class of the gifted?"

The announcement bombarded Xiao Qi's mind like thunder. He felt dizzy and struggled to breathe normally. 'Ye Wei? Did I hear correctly?

Since when is he qualified to be in that class?! He is a talentless one star Student!’

“A student in the class of the gifted can show up to lectures whenever they please, and this is one of the privileges Ye Wei has earned!” The tutor added.

The martial family boys were the first in the class to stand up, and they winked and bowed at Ye Wei, “Brother Ye, congratulations!”

“Gifted as you are it was only the matter of time before you got reassigned!”

“Ye Wei! Don’t forget about us although you won’t be among us!”

The rest of the class started cheering, “Congrats Ye Wei, you are our pride!” Ye Wei’s classmates were a bit confused as nobody knew the details yet, but the tutor’s words were enough. There was no reason to doubt what he said regarding Ye Wei being reassigned.

Nobody even cared about the pale and spaced out Xiao Qi at this point.

“Ye...Ye Wei! You really made it into the gifted class?!” Cao Ning’s eyes were widened as he disbelievingly staring at Ye Wei like an owl.

“Erm... Yea I guess so.” Ye Wei scratched his head and nodded. He realized now that the academy might have learned that he had become Master Yi’s legacy apprentice.

Chapter 56: Dragon

After the class meeting, Ye Wei went back to his trashed room. He didn't unpack earlier so now he just picked up his luggage and a few belongings then followed the tutor to his new residence in the Crouching Dragon Hall under the dim moonlight.

The grounds at Crouching Dragon Hall were filled with trees, and the winding green stone pavement was calm and peaceful.

Now that Ye Wei had become a gifted class student, he had to say goodbye to his old room. All his classmates lived at either the Crouching Dragon Hall or Green Phoenix Hall depending on their gender.

The academy was not going to be stingy when it came to treating Master Yi's only legacy apprentice. They arranged an elegant little house for Ye Wei. It was a house like Lin Zi Yan's residence in Green Phoenix Hall!

Only the top three students in the whole academy were assigned these elegant houses apart from Lin Zi Yan and now Ye Wei.

"I always dreamed of having my own house here at South Star, but now not only am I moving into Crouching Dragon Hall, but I am also getting my own house!"

"Fate is a mysterious thing!" Ye Wei was looking at the luxuriously decorated interior while standing on a rare beast pelt as he exclaimed in awe.

"There are thirty-six students in my new class, and every one of them are astonishing cultivators. A few of them are even younger than I am, and some of them are Warriors! I have to breakthrough soon so I can compete with these people. I was at the bottom of junior three for three years, and I do not wish to be the worst again!"

"I have to become an elite and earn my position properly! It will be hard to catch up to my class, but I will do it!" Ye Wei rubbed his hand together as he tried to motivate himself. His eyes shone with determination.

“Though, I don’t think I will learn anything from class right now. I shouldn’t just tag along with the class and waste the tutor’s time because I’m not on the same level. It wouldn’t be fair to my new classmates, and it won’t be fair to the teachers who would have to pay attention to me just because of my apprenticeship with Master Yi!”

“I need to attain a seven star level before attending class. I will benefit more from training than attending class for now!” Ye Wei made the decision after pondering, he then marched up the engraved staircase into the training room on the second floor. He swallowed a Fiery Sun Quencher pill and started cultivating.

Ye Wei’s recent improvements didn’t change the color of his Sentient. He was still hopelessly slow at absorbing primal energy. If he were to train without any pills or outside help, he would not become a five star Student in less than three years at the least.

Quenchers were his only solution as of now, and he was using a lot of them too. Ye Wei just wanted to get to seven star level as soon as he could. He actually had to thank the Du family, Zhou Wu and Dong Ho for the compensation money because with their financial support he did not have to worry about resources.

With extreme effort, Ye Wei took pill after pill and trained non-stop for seven days.

During this week, he consumed all the Fiery Sun Quenchers in his possession. This helped him gain two more layers of green web under his skin!

When he accumulated ten layers of this Qi web under his skin, then Ye Wei would breakthrough to become a five star Student.

“These pills were really effective... I can’t believe how much I have progressed in just a week; a breakthrough is almost in sight!” Ye Wei slowly opened his eyes and stood up from his lotus position. He clenched his fist and flexed his arm so that he could see the green web under his skin more clearly.

“It’s a shame that I don’t have any more Fiery Sun Quenchers. If I did, it

wouldn't take me more than one month to become a five star Student."

"If only they weren't that rare! Our family can afford them now but had to settle with lower quality pills because of availability." Ye Wei shook his head and sighed reluctantly, displeased with having to fall back to a slower cultivating speed.

'I Wonder how Zi Yan is doing...' After a few days of hard training, the elegant silhouette of Lin Zi Yan appeared in his mind.

Having lost track of time, Ye Wei looked out the window to discover the sun was setting. He stretched his body and went out for some fresh air.

He decided to follow the shaded trail and head towards Green Phoenix Hall. As Ye Wei got closer to the female's hall of residence, he was joined by some familiar faces who were returning to the hall after a busy school day. They all were looking at him and talking about him quietly.

"Isn't that the boy who was chasing after Joe Yin? How many times did he get humiliated by her? Why is he coming back?" A girl with braided hair asked her friends in a judgemental and disdainful tone. She was stopped by one of the girls from speaking further.

"Shuu! Have you not heard what everyone was saying?"

"Heard about what?"

"Do you live in a cave or something? Rumour has it that this boy has an outstanding Soul Sensibility and that he just became Master Yi's legacy apprentice!" The leader of the group answered while admiringly staring at Ye Wei.

"What? How sure are you about that?" The girl with braids asked again disbelievingly. She would have never associated Master Yi with Ye Wei before now.

"I am very certain! He now has his own house at Crouching Dragon Hall, just like that guy!"

"Joe Yin is so lucky! If Joe Yin becomes his girlfriend, she will most likely receive special treatment too! Imagine if she got her own house at

Green Phoenix!" The girl with braids showed a hint of envy.

After hearing that, the girls all had a sour look on their faces as they knew more regarding the situation.

"I heard Joe Yin's father brought her to the Ye mansion for a wedding proposal and got rejected on the spot!" The leader of the group had good sources.

"Wow, I guess a boy with potential like him would aim higher not to mention all the times he has been humiliated by Joe Yin!"

"Why is he heading to Green Phoenix Hall then?"

"For Lin Zi Yan I guess. Her talents would be a good match for a future Runemaster!"

While the group was speculating, a better looking and therefore more confident girl decided to try her luck and took the initiative. She gently flicked her shoulder length hair as she approached Ye Wei.

She waved at him and showed a charming smile, "You're Ye Wei right?"

Ye Wei's eyes locked on to the approaching girl. Her white silk dress complimented her body well, but it was lackluster compared to Lin Zi Yan's natural elegance. He replied coldly, "Yea that's me, can I help you with anything?"

The girl dismissed the cold reply and continued her pursuit with a shy smile: "A few of my friends and I would like to hang out with with you, are you free?" She pointed at the group of pretty girls standing far behind her. They were all shyly looking in Ye Wei's direction and giggling.

"Sorry, I don't have time!" Ye Wei shook his head and directly replied. He walked past her without a second thought.

Ye Wei's reaction stupefied the group of girls.

"Who would have guessed that this red Sentient boy had it in him?"

"Joe Yin must really regret what she did to him now!"

Just behind the girls around the corner stood a girl with ear length hair.

She was quietly watching Ye Wei walking towards Lin Zi Yan's house. Two lines of tears slid down her rosy cheeks as the group of girls talked about how she had missed her chance. Joe Yin saw Ye Wei on her way back from class, but she didn't even have the courage to say hello to him.

She regretted her actions dearly, but regret would not help her by now.

Chapter 57: Sealed

An elegant fragrance struck Ye Wei as he entered Lin Zi Yan's front yard. Curious to find out what it was, he walked towards the mini flower garden to the side where the smell came from.

The source of the fragrance were purple tulips. They were surrounded by different exotic flowers. Ye Wei remembered seeing the same purple tulips embroidered on Lin Zi Yan's clothes and wondered what it represented.

Ye Wei took a deep breath and was refreshed by the sweet scent that reminded him of Zi Yan and her elegance.

He then turned around and looked up. The doors were shut, but Lin Zi Yan did once say that he was welcome to visit anytime. With that in mind, he walked up and gently knocked twice.

"What's going on? Is she not home?" Ye Wei was puzzled because it was way after the last class of the day had ended.

All of a sudden a violent disturbance of Qi was felt by Ye Wei. He felt that it came from the second floor where her training room should be located. The wave hit him internally, and it disrupted both his Qi and blood circulation. The rusty taste of blood was in his mouth suddenly.

'What was that? How come a Qi wave of that magnitude came from Zi Yan's house?'

"She just became a Warrior less than a month ago. This is not something that came from Lin Zi Yan. These escalating violent Qi waves feel more like the clash of Qi in a battle!'

Afraid that Zi Yan was under attack, Ye Wei's face turned ashen. He worryingly rushed towards the front door and tried to open it.

With a huge bang, the doors glowed. The runes inscribed onto the doors shone and repelled him. Ye Wei was knocked off balance and forced to take a few steps back.

These houses were secured by a runic system installed by the academy

to stop unwanted persons from entering. Only authorized people could open the doors under normal circumstances.

Just like Ye Wei's house over at Crouching Dragon Hall, without the correct combination of runes nobody below the condensed prime Warrior level could disarm the security system without the code.

Ye Wei started to panic. He could tell from the fearsome disturbance of Qi that was growing rapidly that it could turn the house into rubble if it was not stopped.

"What should I do?" Ye Wei frowned. He could not afford to lose Zi Yan.

'This was not the time to hesitate!'

Ye Wei took a deep breath and stared at the doors. He remembered seeing Zi Yan opened this set of doors, and he tried to recall what exact she did on this very spot. He cleared his mind and followed his memory, Ye Wei placed his fingers onto the runes on the door and flicked them.

The doors made a clicking sound then opened up. "Yes!" Ye Wei screamed with joy. He felt lucky that his peripheral vision was accurate enough and that he could remember the code under stress.

He didn't waste a second as he ran inside the room without even closing the doors.

It took merely a second for the four star Student to dash up the stairs. The closer he get to the training room, the more suffocated he felt. When he arrived in front of the training room, tides of pressure waves pressed against him so strongly he could hardly breathe. His body and mind were overwhelmed by the fearsome energy surge. He channeled his Qi to fight the outside pressure.

Although a bit scared, Ye Wei opened the training room doors without hesitation.

Expecting to see a fight, Ye Wei was shocked to see the massive Qi surge coming from a gentle figure. There was only one person in the room apart from himself, and it was Lin Zi Yan sitting in a lotus position. She was sitting quietly in the middle of a large carpet.

‘How can she generate energy of this magnitude?’ Ye Wei was first shocked by what was occurring in front of his eyes, and then his face flushed when he took a closer look.

Lin Zi Yan was wearing nothing but a thin silk gown. Damp with sweat; it was almost transparent. Ye Wei was embarrassed and surprised to see this. He couldn’t move nor could he take his eyes off her.

Her flawless skin, her pale and delicate arms, the curves at her chest, the slender waistline, and the muscular but slim legs. Ye Wei could see that her body was a product of years of hard training, and his eyes were drawn by every bit of it.

He couldn’t help himself; no young boy could either.

Ye Wei froze in confusion. He didn’t know if he should leave this scene or not. It was clear that she was in some kind of trouble, but he was also sure that he walked in at a very private moment.

While Ye Wei was pondering, Lin Zi Yan’s moan caught his attention. She looked like she was in great pain, and her slightly loose hair was drenched. Drops of sweat were dripping from the ends onto her body. Aroused by these drops of sweat running down her skin, Ye Wei’s face turned completely red.

As Ye Wei was frozen by the sight, he considered how to apologize when Zi Yan opened her eyes and learned that he had been looking at her barely dressed figure. Suddenly, an intense wave of energy came from Lin Zi Yan’s body and snapped him out of his daze.

Followed by the explosion of Qi, sequences of runes burst out of Lin Zi Yan’s body and started spinning around her. Millions of runes merged in a long chain and formed a purple vortex.

The whirl of runes projected a violet runic pattern onto her. She didn’t look human under the purple light.

After taking a closer look at the whirl, Ye Wei discovered that most of those runes contained massive amounts of energy, and were stronger than Myst stance runes!

It was a mystery to Ye Wei how and where Lin Zi Yan could store that many runes inside her body. This kind of energy would tear one's body apart if they were below the condensed prime Warrior level. But then a couple of strange looking runes caught Ye Wei's eyes. 'Those are dimensional runes! They are only used for sealing!'

It struck Ye Wei that Lin Zi Yan was either a vessel, or her power was being sealed by a sealing stance for some reason. That she was actually much stronger than people believed her to be.

The power surges coming through the seal were filtered and weakened. Ye Wei could not imagine what would happen if the seal was to be broken, how strong would she be.

It has long been apparent to Ye Wei that Lin Zi Yan's family background wasn't ordinary, but today was the first time he was scared and intimidated by it. It was becoming more obvious that she grew up around some very powerful people.

Ye Wei hadn't really known Lin Zi Yan for that long, but he opened his heart to her a little bit without noticing, 'To be strong enough to match her and protect her.', This had become his goal after Ye Wei started to get to know the kind-hearted beauty.

This was a wake-up call. Ye Wei learned right now that he needed to multiply his efforts to reach his goals.

"I will not give up!" Ye Wei was determined although he had no idea how much catching up he would need to do.

The whirl did not stop revolving, it suddenly expanded and released an even stronger wave of energy akin a mini-tsunami.

Chapter 58: Sorry

The fearsome wave of energy came crashing into Ye Wei, and he was knocked flying before he could react and defend himself although the result would have been the same. He was shocked by the impact and the next thing he knew, he was on the ground feeling like his organs were all twisted together.

Ye Wei quickly got up and swallowed a pill. He sat in a lotus position and adjusted his disturbed Qi flow.

‘What is happening? I don’t understand!’ Ye Wei was increasingly confused by Lin Zi Yan, who was sitting still with closed eyes.

Under great pain, Lin Zi Yan’s lovely facial features were all squeezed together. Ye Wei had never seen Zi Yan looking like this. He could not help but empathize with her as she was going through this agonizing experience.

Just as Ye Wei started breathing normally again, the whirl of runes contracted. They touched Lin Zi Yan’s skin and disappeared altogether, and the Qi waves vanished instantaneously as well.

While Ye Wei was relieved, Lin Zi Yan did not look like she was suffering any less. A small amount of blood leaked out of her mouth and slid down her pale chin. She then lost balance and fell over.

Lin Zi Yan’s fall did not go unnoticed by Ye Wei. He immediately stood up and ran over to hold her tightly as she fell.

Lin Zi Yan had no strength left in her body, and she struggled just to open her eyes. Her brain registered the familiar face then she asked in a low whispering voice, “Ye Wei why are you here? Am I dreaming?” Zi Yan was barely conscious and weakening as she spoke.

Ye Wei grabbed her arm and tried to feel her pulse. He realized it was weak, and it felt like it would stop at any second. ‘What should I do now?’

While feeling Lin Zi Yan’s pulse, Ye Wei noticed there was a fading marking on each of her wrists that resembled a runic seal. They were only

one shade darker than her skin was and were hard to notice unless observed closely.

Ye Wei was trying to work out whether these marks had anything to do with what just happened to Lin Zi Yan while he carried her to lay on the little bed to the side.

Ye Wei was close enough to smell the sweat on Lin Zi Yan's drenched silk gown; it was sticking onto her body, and he couldn't help but trace the outline of her body with his eyes. From her perky breasts to her flat, smooth stomach and all the way down her toned legs, every inch of her skin was driving Ye Wei crazy, but he had much more serious matter to deal with, and he knew it.

He took out a meridian nourishing Jade Moistener pill and fed it to Lin Zi Yan. It was not a valuable concoction, but Ye Wei knew from his experience that this common pill was exactly what she needed at the moment.

"Water..." Lin Zi Yan mumbled, having sweated for hours she was extremely dehydrated.

Ye Wei went downstairs and started a fire for the kettle then returned to pour a glass of lukewarm water slowly down Lin Zi Yan's throat.

Afraid that Zi Yan might catch a cold, Ye Wei channeled his Qi around his arms to warm Lin Zi Yan up and evaporate the sweat covering her gown. After a minute, her body was warm again and covered by a dry and therefore less revealing gown.

After Ye Wei warmed Lin Zi Yan up, he checked her breathing and her pulse. Luckily she appeared to have stabilized but was still very weak.

After Lin Zi Yan had stabilized a little, Ye Wei could finally relax. He took a deep breath and sat down next to the bed. Ye Wei was just inches away from Lin Zi Yan, but he felt distant; he knew nothing about her apart from her name and her brilliance. Although they were becoming close, the mysteries around her still remained; where was her family? What was sealed inside her body? Why was she in Green Moon City?

Ye Wei appreciated Lin Zi Yan's cute face while she slept meanwhile he asked himself these questions over and over again. He was trying to sketch a possible answer in his mind that would explain every question he had regarding her. He had a feeling that Lin Zi Yan was going to leave Green Moon City one day to return home. And that the place Zi Yan call home would be somehow related to the dynasty.

'Either way, I just need to get stronger! I am Master Yi's legacy apprentice. I won't be trapped in this little city forever.' Self-motivating had become a habit of Ye Wei's whenever he felt challenged.

For the next twenty hours, Lin Zi Yan was going in and out of a comatose state while Ye Wei guarded her, and fed her pills and water. Lin Zi Yan was starting to move a little, and showing signs of recovery.

While Ye Wei was taking care of her with his best efforts, Lin Zi Yan had the two longest dreams she had ever had. In the first one, she visited a magnificent hall where her parents and the rest of her family were present; Ye Wei was there with her too.

Upon arriving at Green Moon City, Lin Zi Yan was solely focused on her studies at South Star Academy. Although she was a popular girl with a lot of admirers, she always kept a distance with them and enjoyed her own company instead. That was before she got to know Ye Wei.

Undoubtedly, Lin Zi Yan held Ye Wei's talent in high regard. She was curious about how he acquired so much knowledge at such young age, and she greatly respected his resilience in the face of adversity. Maybe it was the fact that Ye Wei was two years younger than her that caused her to slowly let her guard down and welcomed him into her life like something akin to a little brother. Thus, that made Ye Wei one of the closest people she knew in this city.

In her second dream, she was training and attempting to break the seals on her body when she diverted her Qi to the wrong set of meridians. Not only did this accident cause her to failed, but her Sentient was impacted by her own Qi. She then used all her efforts to guide her Qi back to the right path. Although the situation improved, she was completely

exhausted and dehydrated, and at this time, Ye Wei entered her second dream. She then felt embarrassed because her clothes were completely transparent from sweat but she was unable to do anything.

‘That was a strange dream!’ Was the thought that woke Lin Zi Yan up. She slowly opened her eyes, but the glaring sun made her narrow them again.

“Zi Yan, are you awake?” Ye Wei was ecstatic. He stood up enthusiastically and asked, “How do you feel?”

“Little Wei...?” Lin Zi Yan was shocked then she realized that the second dream was her actual memory. She then looked down to see if she was decently dressed. She could see a blanket on top of her body, and judging by the texture her skin felt, she knew she was wearing nothing but a thin silk gown.

Lin Zi Yan blushed, and the temperature of her skin dramatically rose upon realizing Ye Wei saw her bare body. It was the first time since she was born that anyone saw her wearing this little. It caused a complicated feeling to arise when she knew she revealed that much in front of a boy.

This was not the plan. Lin Zi Yan wore that thin gown assuming she would be training alone and that it would provide better ventilation when her body temperature eventually rose due to the amount of Qi involved in breaking the seals. Never would she have imagined that Ye Wei, or anyone, would come through the locked doors.

Ye Wei knew what Lin Zi Yan’s facial expression meant, and he immediately tried to explain the situation and ease the tension. He didn’t want to be labeled as a pervert after all, “Zi Yan, I didn’t mean to intrude, but I felt a big disturbance of Qi when I was waiting for you to answer the door. Judging by the magnitude of the pressure waves, it was not what I assumed you could create which led me to believe that you were under attack. I thought you were in danger, so I just rushed in. I couldn’t believe what I saw when I finally came in...”

While Lin Zi Yan bought the explanation and was touched by how Ye Wei cared about her, she was not at all over the fact that a boy just saw

her body. She was a great scholar but nothing she learned taught her how to behave in such situation.

Ye Wei too was stupefied because of the situation the two were in. He just hoped what he did would eventually be forgiven or forgotten.

“I am so sorry!” Ye Wei said with his head facing down.

Chapter 59: Caretaking

Looking Ye Wei's guilty face, Lin Zi Yan didn't know how to react. She grabbed her blanket tightly and sighed deeply.

'Should I really hold a grudge against Ye Wei for this? His intentions were good, and if it wasn't for him looking after me the injuries I sustained from this accident could have killed me...'

Feeling embarrassed and struggling to stay calm, Lin Zi Yan's reasonings told her that she should let it go, but her emotions said not to.

"Ye Wei." The blushing on Zi Yan's face showed no signs of fading as she raised her head to look Ye Wei in the eyes. She said, "What you saw does not leave this room, okay?"

"My lips are sealed!" Ye Wei nodded heavily seeing as Lin Zi Yan was prepared to bury this incident and move on, but he felt inexplicably unsettled.

"If others learned about what happened today... you might actually get killed!" Lin Zi Yan warned him in a serious tone.

Ye Wei was puzzled why Zi Yan would be so caught up with what happened, and he wondered if she found him untrustworthy. He would never say anything that would ruin her reputation no matter what.

'He looks pretty cute when he's confused. Although he does look childish but he is quite a handsome boy...' Lin Zi Yan's mind wandered. 'What am I thinking!?'

The rush of blood to her head didn't really help her regain her strength. She wanted to get up, but her dantian and her meridians in her limbs were still weak, so she gave up trying once she noticed how floppy her arms and legs were.

"Ye Wei, can you make me some food?" She resorted to asking for help instead.

"I will get right to it!" Ye Wei replied reflexively and ran downstairs to the kitchen. The Ye's had servants, but they were taught to do these basic

things themselves from a young age which made him quite a good cook for someone with his family background.

Shortly after he went down the stairs, Ye Wei came back up holding a tray with a bowl of warm congee and some pills.

While Ye Wei was downstairs cooking, Zi Yan tried to strengthen her body by filling herself with Qi but failed miserably because of her dantian's injury.

"Zi Yan, let me help you sit yourself up..." The awkwardness remained, but she was incapable of taking care of herself for the time being.

"Yea." Lin Zi Yan shyly nodded.

Ye Wei put the tray on the nightstand and took her hand to help her up. He then held her in his left arm and fed her one spoonful at a time.

Their bodily contact did not help lighten the atmosphere.

Feeling Ye Wei's warm palm on her back, his touch sent shivers down her spine. It was one thing knowing he saw and touched her body when she was barely conscious, but quite another to experience it fully awake. While she was aware that he was not strong enough to protect her, she had never felt more secure than right now leaning on his chest and feeling his heartbeat.

Right now Lin Zi Yan was just a teenager caught in the moment, and she had no idea this memory would stay in her heart and revisit her more often than she could ever imagine.

Ye Wei was very careful when feeding her. He blew on each spoonful of food to make sure it wasn't too hot. While he was unquestionably doing a decent job at being attentive, he couldn't help but shift his attention to Zi Yan's wonderful scent and her exposed body through the opening of the silk gown.

It was Ye Wei's first time being this close to a girl he liked, and he kept telling himself it was not appropriate to stare, but he just couldn't help himself.

Aware of Ye Wei's gaze, Lin Zi Yan subtly tried to cover her chest with her arm, but it only opened up her gown even more. Her anxiety and embarrassment were becoming unbearable all of a sudden.

"Ye Wei!" She stared at him rebukingly. She knew this was unavoidable being in the same room with a young boy while dressed like this, but she expected better from this boy.

It was impossible for either one of them to remain calm while Ye Wei was ashamed of his behavior, it was just too hard for him not to look at the girl of his dreams; in fact, the fondness was mutual, but Lin Zi Yan had more on her mind. She knew her family background would make her relationships more complicated than she would have liked, and that her future was not really in her own hands.

Although Ye Wei had potential, Lin Zi Yan was mindful of how difficult it was for an outsider to earn her family's approval and trust. A century old superpower was not going to accept a nameless boy to continue their prideful bloodline.

Lin Zi Yan signed resentfully. Sometimes she just wished she was born into an ordinary family.

She wished she could live a simple life without being involved in family disputes and having to please other people's wishes.

'I will get away someday...'

The awkward silence seemed never ending. After finishing her food quietly with Ye Wei's aid, Zi Yan felt somewhat energized and wanting to cover herself up a little more to ease the tension, "Help me up. I would like to get changed!" Her face was still completely red.

"Yea!" Ye Wei nodded and helped her balance while she took small wobbly steps back to her room.

Ye Wei stepped out of the room then shut the doors behind him. He took a deep breath and loosened his shoulders. Scenes from the training room incident kept replaying in his head. He deeply regretted his behavior, but on the other hand, he couldn't rid himself of his impure

thoughts.

Just being left alone was enough to make his mind wander. He couldn't stop visualizing how Lin Zi Yan was getting changed behind the door. He shook his head and sat down to cultivate, hoping that would clear his mind.

As he was beginning to focus, he was immediately distracted by a loud bang from inside the room.

'What now?' Ye Wei was worried. He jumped up and knocked on her door quickly. "Zi Yan! What's happening?" He screamed hysterically.

"I'm fine!" Her tone of voice was hard, but it was also shaky and the volume was low. It sounded to Ye Wei that she was in pain.

The seals on Lin Zi Yan's body were too strong, and she literally used all of her Qi and energy earlier trying to break one of them. Until her meridians and dantian recovered, she would not be able to store Qi in her body. She was now as weak as a normal person.

Ye Wei was not convinced, and he stood right outside the door listening closely for any movements.

Seconds later, another banging noise came from the room followed by the sound of Lin Zi Yan grunting.

"Zi Yan!" Ye Wei screamed anxiously. He did not get a reply, and therefore shouted again. Even then still not a sound came from the room.

He started to panic. 'What just happened!?' He was too worried to stand still and wait around while Zi Yan could be dying. He slammed the door open hoping it was not too late.

Chapter 60: Promise

Ye Wei rushed in to discover Lin Zi Yan lying on the ground. The left sleeve of her gown was dyed red by blood. He immediately ran forward to check her condition.

There was a huge bruise on her forehead and a long cut on her arm that didn't look like it was going to stop bleeding anytime soon.

"Zi Yan! Can you hear me?" Ye Wei was completely distressed. He knelt down to feed her another Jade Moistener pill after which he crushed a trauma pill into powder and applied it to her wound.

"I... I'm okay." Lin Zi Yan drowsily opened her eyes. She panicked again when she realized she was still in the same revealing silk gown. She tried to turn away from Ye Wei and stand up but immediately lost her balance and slipped. Luckily Ye Wei caught her before she hurt herself more. The seals on her body were very unstable at the moment and were disrupting her body functions, or else she would have already recovered given that she was stronger than most humans.

Ye Wei didn't understand why she was panicking and acting crazy. "Stop moving!" He said while frowning.

After Zi Yan was calmed down by Ye Wei's steady voice, he wrapped his right arm behind her neck and lifted her legs with his free hand then slowly rested her body on the bed. Just as he let go of her body, her gown slid off.

Lin Zi Yan closed her eyes and shivered in embarrassment. She didn't even have the strength to cover her body with her hands. She had never felt this weak her entire life; she was scared, shy, and drowning in helplessness.

The soft and smooth texture was telling Ye Wei that he should not let go, but he did not let his impulses get the better of him. Instead, he focused on Zi Yan's tired face, and how to help her recover.

'One day I will win her heart properly, and before then I should not

allow myself to take advantage of situations like this. She is too gentle and nice; I can't degrade her any further.'

Lin Zi Yan's eyes were tightly shut, so tight that her eyelashes were twitching. She just wanted to hide her nervousness and forget about the awkward situation she was in.

Ye Wei reached for the blanket and gently laid it on top of Zi Yan. He was actually relieved that she was now covered as he could finally think straight again. He filled his hand with Qi and placed them on Lin Zi Yan's forehead, and then started massaging the bruise. The bruise faded little by little with each of Ye Wei's strokes.

Lin Zi Yan slowly opened her eyes after understanding Ye Wei's intent. She actually started to relax and enjoy the little treat.

Although they weren't talking, their body language showed that they both felt warm and blissful.

Lin Zi Yan was watching Ye Wei, it was simply impossible for him to break eye contact. Feeling that the tension was building, Ye Wei opted to start a conversation. "So why did you move to Green Moon City on your own?"

Lin Zi Yan heard the question but was hesitant to answer. She arranged her thoughts and said: "Sorry, I can not go into details about that!"

"Oh..." Ye Wei felt slightly upset by Zi Yan being so secretive.

Zi Yan could see from Ye Wei's facial expression that he was offended, and as she didn't want to come across as distrusting she explained, "There is a large city thousands of miles away from here. It is hundreds of times bigger than Green Moon City. The martial families there are so strong it is actually hard to compare them to the forces here. My family is one of the most resourceful and influential families there. There are people in my family who could single-handedly erase Green Moon City off the map!"

Ye Wei's eyes widened. He had heard about the world beyond Green Moon City, and he was told there were unimaginable powers out there,

but he never thought he would meet a person from one of those high places. That someone actually turned out to be Lin Zi Yan.

“I am a direct descendant of my family. When I was born, somebody put numerous seals on my body. If I want to breakthrough one level, I will have to spend extra effort on loosening or breaking the seals so I can access my Qi.” Lin Zi Yan continued, “However, I can use part of the sealed energy at random times, they are out of control. I have always wondered who put these seals on me and for what reason...”

It was an unexpected confession, and Ye Wei did not even understand half of what Lin Zi Yan was saying. He did know that Lin Zi Yan becoming a Warrior under these circumstances was quite astonishing.

“Just focus on training. When you are stronger and able to defend yourself, I might tell you more! I did loosen a couple seals today and got some of my power back from that. I will be stronger than I am now once my body recovers.” Lin Zi Yan smiled to cover up her worries; the past two days hadn’t treated her well.

“That’s good to hear!” Ye Wei nodded and replied. He then solemnly looked at Lin Zi Yan and continued, “Zi Yan, next time you attempt to break those seals, let me know in advance. I will come to guard you!”

Unsure about Ye Wei’s intention, Lin Zi Yan started blushing again, “Erm... Why?” She asked shyly.

Ye Wei’s face turned red and started stammering, “I... I’m just, just worried that you will get into an accident like this again...”

Lin Zi Yan was not sure whether to accept his offer or not. She would have to be in thin clothes when she trains again. She did not want to go through this embarrassing situation all over again.

“Zi Yan, I will get you another glass of water.” The awkward silence was getting to Ye Wei’s nerves; he thought she wanted to say no but couldn’t say it to his face. He stood up and tried to escaped downstairs

Just as he was leaving the room, Lin Zi Yan stopped him: “Ye Wei...”

“What’s the matter?” He turned around in confusion not knowing what

to expect.

Lin Zi Yan looked toward Ye Wei with a soft gaze, “Ye Wei, I meant it earlier... Nobody can know about what happened today, not a single detail... We...” She didn’t know whether to tell how she felt about him.

“I know. This will be our secret!” Ye Wei was increasingly frustrated. He tried to stay calm, but it was just impossible. He stomped out through the doors right after he replied.

Lin Zi Yan could see Ye Wei was hurt, and her heart was hurting from feeling guilty for giving him so much information at once and pushing him away to an extent.

Ye Wei suddenly stopped by the door on his way out. He did not turn around, but he spoke loud enough for Lin Zi Yan to hear it, “I know I am not good enough for you both in terms of my family background and cultivation. You are in another world than me...”

“No... That’s not what I mean...” Lin Zi Yan’s eyes turned red, and her heart was aching. She couldn’t find the right words to explain how she felt.

“But...” Ye Wei took a deep breath and said with determination, “My family is not very powerful, but we will work our way up; I am weak, but I will keep training as hard as I can! I will catch up with you one day and even overtake you! I just got to know you not long ago, but you’ve become the most important girl in my life. We are more like brother and sister now, but when I am strong enough I will ask you out properly and hopefully you’d eventually become my wife...”

Ye Wei stormed downstairs after giving the speech.

Lin Zi Yan was not expecting a confession, and her face was as red as a cherry tomato. The sweet taste lingered in her mouth while a line of tears ran down her face.

‘Ye Wei, you are talented and hardworking, but you don’t understand how my family works... I can’t expose you to that kind of risk. I’m so sorry.’ Lin Zi Yan sighed and wiped her tears dry.

Chapter 61: Bloodmist Valley

After Ye Wei returned with a glass of water, the pair didn't say a word as they both preferred the silence. He stayed by the bedside to guard Lin Zi Yan while she recovered.

Although Zi Yan was touched by his kindness, she treated Ye Wei coldly. Contrary to her heart, she didn't want him to get too close and get hurt.

Time flew and by the time Zi Yan was almost in her best condition, two more days had passed. Her cultivation hit a new high as her body recovered.

When Lin Zi Yan was strong enough to get out of bed by herself, Ye Wei decided it was time for him to leave: "Zi Yan, I am off!"

While Ye Wei was walking away, Zi Yan did not take her eyes off his back. She wanted to talk to him, but when she opened her lips nothing would come out.

'Why was I born into this family? Why can't I decide anything by myself? I just want to have a simple life! Ye Wei, I can't be with you but I know you will do well for yourself. I hope I can see that day with my own eyes before I have to leave the city...'

Her heartache choked her as she cried quietly.

Zi Yan was not the only one feeling uneasy, Ye Wei was hurt but he believed he had the capability to improve and didn't let the devastation stay in his system. Ignoring the attention he got from his fellow students on the path to the dorms, he ran back to his place while planning how to fulfil his dreams. His dreams about becoming a Runemaster, about making his family thrive, and his dreams about Zi Yan.

He noticed that the sun was shining through the gap between a few large rainclouds as he looked up to the sky now and then, appreciating the spectacular scenery as his mind wandered. Ye Wei immediately starting cultivating again once he arrived back at his house.

While Ye Wei was training behind closed doors, a few things happened inside and outside the academy.

The news of his status spread to all the staff and student. The story of a one star Student becoming Master Yi's apprentice was an inspiring one, and the atmosphere at South Star Academy had never been this positive. Some of the students who were about to give up were reinvigorated, and the students who were already doing well were now doubling their efforts.

Xiao Qi did not have the best time because it was a commonly known fact that he did not get along with Ye Wei. So after the news broke, everyone started to alienate him. Some kids from martial families even started to pick fights with him hoping Ye Wei would hear about it. Xiao Qi's social life had never been this bad. He was very frustrated as he was not at all used to being on the receiving end of bullying or being left alone.

With Du Ming Ze when the teachers found out what he did to Ye Wei's old room they notified his family about his misconduct. When the Du family learned about it, they were petrified. They knew what it meant to be on the wrong side of Master Yi, and the Ye family. The Du family took Du Ming Ze out of South Star Academy and rumour had it that they physically punished him so hard that he had to rest in bed for weeks.

While people expected Master Mu to speak to Master Yi to solve some of their disagreements, he never really stood up for the Du family, nor did he show himself in public after the duel. That was when Green Moon City realized that although both of them were Runemasters, Master Yi and Master Mu were on completely different levels.

All this was told to Ye Wei by Cao Ning; he remained close with Ye Wei even after the move. He visited Ye Wei a few times with gossip and supplies, this let Ye Wei focus solely on his training. Though, because of this Cao Ning's friendship with Ye Wei was spotted by people. The martial families treated him as Ye Wei's sidekick, a close associate. They would give Cao Ning pills and other gifts now and then which improved his cultivation speed.

‘I wonder what Master Yi is up to at the moment.’ Ye Wei thought as he was taking a little break from training. A few days had passed since he returned from Lin Zi Yan’s.

There was a knocking sound on the door and Ye Wei was surprised to see who came to his house.

“Zi Yan...?!” Ye Wei blushed when he saw the face of the girl he had been thinking about the past few days.

“Hey, you look surprised! Am I not welcome here?” Lin Zi Yan was wearing a cheeky smile. It seemed like she had put the embarrassing incident behind her.

“Of course you are welcome! I was just expecting to see Cao Ning’s silly face.” Ye Wei shook his head and broke into a smile.

Lin Zi Yan could see from his darkened eyes that he was tired. She was happy to be able to refresh him with great news, “Little Wei, I have received information regarding Welkin Leaves!”

“Really!? Where!?” The news widened Ye Wei’s tired eyes, and he looked more energized than he had for days.

“Bloodmist Valley!” Lin Zi Yan felt Ye Wei’s enthusiasm and surprise and therefore answered immediately.

“Blood what?” Ye Wei frowned as the name did not ring any bells.

“It is to the north of Frozen Sun City, deep inside the Red Wolf Mountains.” Lin Zi Yan explained, “About half a month ago, the Lee family of Frozen Sun City sent their youngsters to train in the mountains, and when they went past Bloodmist Valley they found some Welkin Leaves trimmings.”

“And what happened to them?” Ye Wei couldn’t wait for Lin Zi Yan to finish.

“The Lee family sold them to an anonymous Runemaster for one point eight million silver. The transaction was kept on the down low, and that’s all the information my source could find unfortunately.” Lin Zi Yan

frowned and said in a slightly regretful tone.

“Okay.” Ye Wei digested what he heard then nodded. ‘If he bought it for that price, I don’t think he would resell it for a profit. Needless to say the Runemaster would be nowhere to be found anyway...’

“I will go to Bloodmist Valley!” Ye Wei took a deep breath and said to Lin Zi Yan, his determination was audible.

Although Ye Wei had no idea where it was, he was ready to go through the gates of hell for his cousin whom he owed his life to without a word of complaint.

“I have a beast carriage ready for us.” Ye Wei’s hasty decision was all within Lin Zi Yan’s calculation. Proud of her prediction and entertained by Ye Wei’s hotheadedness, she chuckled.

“Zi Yan... You can’t go!” Ye Wei frowned, he did not want to rely on Zi Yan when it came to family business. He was too prideful and felt that he owed her enough already.

“If I don’t tag along, it will take you a very long time to locate Bloodmist Valley!” Lin Zi Yan smiled at Ye Wei with a light blush. “Just let me help you as kind of a repayment!”

Ye Wei didn’t understand she seemed so happy. A few days ago the tension between them was unbearable. He nodded and said, “You’re right, I appreciate your help.”

“Let’s get ready!” Lin Zi Yan said lightheartedly as she proceeded to help Ye Wei pack then led him out of the house.

A horned elephant carriage was waiting outside, and they quickly boarded and headed off.

Frozen Sun City was a city located to the west of Green Moon City. It was way larger and more populated than Ye Wei’s hometown. When the carriage drove past the busy streets of the big city, Ye Wei was amused by the view and the people.

They went off road at the north end of the city into the wilderness and

passed through the mountains. As they got closer to their destination the red mist was thickening. The mist was constantly changing shape from one second to the next and it smelled a little like blood.

‘We will be there soon...’ Lin Zi Yan slowed the beast down before they were spotted by other travellers as she did not wish to draw too much attention.

After arriving, they got off the carriage and walked towards Bloodmist Valley. Ye Wei could hear chattering noises in front of him, and he quietly walked ahead of Lin Zi Yan. He spotted a large group of tents on the flat ground far ahead. ‘Why are all these people here?’

Lin Zi Yan could see Ye Wei was confused, “Bloodmist Valley is a very strange place. According to legends, it was the training ground for a very strong group of cultivators. They left a lot of treasures in there and they made the mist with a stance to keep people out of this place. The stronger one is, the more one will be hurt by the red mist. It is life-threatening for cultivators above Warrior level, and I’ve heard tales of condensed prime Warriors getting paralyzed by the mist long time ago when they discovered the place.” She told Ye Wei as she was looking at an old sheepskin map in her hand.

“See the thick mist over there? It gets thinner every few days, sometimes weeks, and when it does we will enter, but we will have to watch for the signs. When the mist starts thickening again, we will get out. People have found great treasures in there, but not all of them found their way back out of the thick mist...” Lin Zi Yan said as the two walked towards the edge of the valley. There were more than a hundred groups of people gathered close by where the thick mist was. The pair decided to wait near the others so they too could enter as soon as the mist dispersed.

Although they tried to keep a low profile, the beauty of Lin Zi Yan had the opposite effect. The cultivators couldn’t help but talk about the elegant girl who had just arrived. How she was dressed like someone important, and how lucky Ye Wei was to have her company.

“That’s a lot of people. They look like they know the valley well so they

must be here for the treasures.” Ye Wei shared his concern with Lin Zi Yan, “We will have to act quickly and seize the chance before the herb is spotted by anyone else. I don’t want to miss this chance to save Cousin Zhong.” He clenched his fist with determination and took a couple of deep breaths, then went back to observing the ever changing mist.

Chapter 62: Talents From Ning City

“Oh? A beast carriage? And there were only two of them?” A routine scouting report raised a green shirted youngster’s suspicion. “A skinny boy and a purple haired girl right?” His surveillance was concealed by many others who were looking in the same direction.

At the age of fifteen, Li Zi Yan looked way more mature and elegant than most teenage girls therefore it was not a surprise that she was drawing so much attention.

But simply watching them did not provide enough information so approached the couple, “Hi!” He greeted them while astounded by Li Zi Yan’s beauty after taking a closer look.

Alarmed by the green shirted youngster’s diplomatic smile, Li Zi Yan subconsciously took a small step back.

Driven by the need to befriend and find out more about the couple who traveled in such a luxurious carriage, he enthusiastically lifted his hand towards Ye Wei, “My name is Zhou Hou, what about you?” He saw the indifference from Li Yan Yan’s posture and figured he could find out more from the innocent looking Ye Wei.

“I am Ye Wei!” He wondered if he should use a pseudonym but didn’t see the need because it seemed that people here came from all across the country, and Ye Wei was a pretty common name anyways.

“First time here?” Zhou Hou asked with a smile on his face after briefly looking them over.

“How did you know?”

“I’ve been here before. During which, I had to camp for months. If I don’t recognize you then you’re probably a first-timer!” Zhou Hou chuckled then continued, “I basically know this place like the back of my hand.”

“Ah... That makes sense!” Ye Wei nodded.

“May I ask where you two are from?” He could feel Ye Wei’s guard was

down.

Lin Zi Yan discreetly nudged Ye Wei and he finally realized what Zhou Hou was trying to do. “We are from far away, we’re just passing through!”

Zhou Hou was no fool; he didn’t expected them to tell the whole truth so he just smiled and nodded. “Bloodmist Valley is an interesting place, Students can basically walk in unaffected by the mist whereas Warriors can’t really enter unless the mist is thin. Not to mention condensed prime Warriors who will most definitely be killed if they enter! With that in mind Students should still bring a Warrior with them because there are some strange and dangerous creatures within the valley...” He kept playing the friendly stranger.

‘Judging by their age they are at most Students, but why are they so calm? People usually freak out a little when I tell them about the valley.’ Zhou Hou thought as he kept analysing the couple. ‘They seem rich in the end, so they probably came prepared.’ He was thinking about recruiting the two for his expedition team to increase their chances of salvaging something valuable.

Zhou Hou guessed correctly, Ye Wei and Lin Zi Yan talked about what they were going to do when they were in the carriage.

“There are fifty-six people in my group. Seventeen of them are Warriors, would you two be interested in joining us? We have been in the valley before, and we’re familiar with the terrain. You two seem like nice people, and it would be mutually beneficial for both parties.” He suggested with a smile on his face, and as he spoke he could feel that Lin Zi Yan was not just a pretty face.

Ye Wei turned to Lin Zi Yan for her opinion, but before he could open his mouth she answered Zhou Hou in a cold, calm tone: “We can go together, but if we find Welkin Leaves they are ours, everything else you can keep.”

“Oh that’s what you two want? No worries! We will enter the valley together, and when you two find what you want you can leave, but staying together will increase our chances of getting out safe!” Zhou Hou admired

their bravery, just a while back a group of thirty warriors were ambushed by a group of beast and never made it out of the valley. The past of the Bloodmist Valley was literally painted in blood.

“There around ten thousand people here at this campsite; some are alone while others prefer to be in groups. We are actually one of the stronger groups. Some of the others are pretty hopeless actually, like those guys over there. I don’t even see the point of them trying!” Zhou Hou pointed to a group of seven aggressive looking youngsters and chuckled, “I heard the strongest of them is only a five star Student!”

Lin Zi Yan’s eyes followed Zhou Hou’s finger to the group and a purple light flashed through her eyes. She was intrigued by the aura they were giving off.

Ye Wei too found the group intriguing. Judging by their confident appearance, they didn’t look like five star Students to him.

“Stop staring at them, they are not worth our time.” Zhou Hou said pridefully as he signaled the couple to follow him.

“Little Wei, this is for you!” Lin Zi Yan discreetly handed Ye Wei a interspatial bag.

He opened it and peeked inside. He discovered that there were five Mystic scrolls within, and he couldn’t help but be shocked. Each of the scrolls was worth a fortune and Lin Zi Yan had just given him five.

Ye Wei wanted to decline the gift, but Lin Zi Yan held his hand down, and signaled for him to be discreet.

“These two are defensive scrolls.” Lin Zi Yan pointed inside the bag and whispered in Ye Wei’s ear, “You will activate a defensive Mystic stance by tearing it. Only use them when you’re in trouble. And the other three are offensive ones.”

The physical contact and her soft voice sent a shiver down his spine.

“Remember their faces!” Zhou Hou pointed at a group of teenagers in a distance. They were wearing blood colored uniforms with a golden hem. He seemed intimidated just by the sight of them.

“They are all from the Golden Wood Academy in Frozen Sun City. Everyone of them is a seven star Warrior or above. Their leader is the nine star Warrior, Luo Wu Xue. He is the most talented student at his school, and he defeated a ten star Warrior with a low level Myst stance. He’s quite a character...”

Ye Wei followed Zhou Hou’s glance, and he saw three youngsters dressed in red about three hundred meters away from him.

One of them was significantly paler than the other two. He was wearing the same robe as the others, but his tall build set him apart. Luo Wu Xue was sat down cultivating but even still he stood out. He quietly cultivated, and while he did there was a screen of red Qi surrounding him.

‘I can feel his energy from here... What kind of stance is that?’ Ye Wei was slightly scared from what he was seeing.

Lin Zi Yan though was calm and collected like usual. She didn’t seem to care about these three while Zhou Hou was too afraid to keep his eyes on them. He turned away and briefly introduced some of the other campers around them.

“Yue Yao, the strongest youngster of the Yue family from Frozen Sun City. He is only seventeen but he is already a seven star Warrior!”

“Lu Chao, the strongest youngster in the Lu family, also from Frozen Sun City.”

“Hong Xun. Now, he is a mysterious one. Nobody knows where he is from or how powerful he is. But three days ago he had a fight with a six star Warrior over a disagreement, and he managed to kill his opponent with one palm strike...”

With that many people gathered in one place, conflicts were very common between groups and families. Every once in awhile there were some condensed prime Warriors at the camps sent by the groups’ leaders to protect the youngsters before they enter the Bloodmist Valley.

“These four are the most dangerous people here, that we know of at least.” Months of being at the camp made Zhou Hou quite paranoid and

cautious but that's what kept him alive. "Just avoid conflicts if you can; it's for the best." He then led Ye Wei and Lin Zi Yan to his group.

Everyone was there. The seventeen Warriors along with the rest who were nine, or ten star Students. Although they were sitting together by the campfire, they weren't really talking because they were just temporarily put together for the expedition.

"We don't know when the blood mist will thin out. It might be in a few hours or in a few days..." Zhou Hou said reluctantly.

After the talk with Zhou Hou, Ye Wei and Lin Zi Yan settled down and started training by the campfire while waiting for the mist to fade.

A few campers near them started chatting.

"I've heard a group of youngsters from Ning City just arrived!"

"Ning City? Maybe they are here for the inner regions."

"You're saying that they want to enter the forbidden sanctums? That would be interesting, I don't think anyone has ever made it there. Well maybe they did, but they didn't live to tell the tale."

"I don't know, we'll see."

Ning City was the biggest of the thirty-six cities on the outskirts of the dynasty's territory. This big city attracted talents from everywhere, and rumour had it that some returned prime Warriors resided there.

"Why would they be here otherwise? I think they came prepared."

At the other side of the campfire, Lin Zi Yan was disturbed by what she heard, and she opened her eyes while frowning.

Chapter 63: Rune Barrier

Lin Zi Yan quickly calmed down and went back to training.

A lavishly dressed teenage boy walked passed Zhou Hou's camp, and he spotted the most astounding beauty he had ever encountered; a girl that made his heart skip a beat.

He couldn't stop his feet from walking towards Lin Zi Yan. He saw that Ye Wei sat right next to her, but he didn't think the plain-looking boy was associated with her.

"Hello, my name is Lu Chao. I am from the Lu family in Frozen Sun City. What would you like me to refer to you as?" His snobbishness was over the top, and you could tell he was proud of himself from his posture all the way to the way he introduced himself. Being the boy with the most potential in his family, and also one of the top three teenagers in his city did more harm than good to his personality.

Zhou Hou was alarmed by Lu Chao's visit. 'Why is he here?' He wasn't the only person who was not pleased with the sudden visit. Lin Zi Yan wasn't impressed by Lu Chao's attitude and therefore didn't reply while Ye Wei just frowned.

The tension was building up, and Zhou Hou came over to dismiss the unwanted visitor. "Mister Lu, it's good to see you. Did you need something from her? She is a member of our group; maybe I can help?"

"You have no business here!" Lu Chao did not respect Zhou Hou at all as he knew he didn't have to. "Can't you see I am trying to have a conversation with this lady?"

He pushed Zhou Hou to the side and continued speaking to Lin Zi Yan, "If you wish to enter the Bloodmist Valley you might as well join us! I can guarantee your safety under our banner." He garnished his offer with a confident smile.

"Please leave me alone!" Lin Zi Yan was irritated not charmed. Her tone of voice was as cold as ice.

In frustration, Lu Chao frowned and grunted, he couldn't understand why she treated him like this, "What do you mean miss?" He had not been declined his whole life.

"I would like you to go away. Do you understand?" Lin Zi Yan raised her long, slender eyebrows as the temperature around her seemed to have dropped suddenly.

"Don't insult me!" Lu Chao looked furiously at Lin Zi Yan.

Ye Wei clenched his fists; he wouldn't sit back if Lu Chao decided to move any closer to Lin Zi Yan, regardless of his cultivation deficit.

A purple light flashed through Lin Zi Yan's pupils, Lu Chao's head slightly dropped forward, his confidence was replaced by fear. He was spooked by what he saw in her eyes; his body froze, and his palms turned sweaty.

"My lady, I should not have disturbed you. I apologize for the intrusion." He pulled his shoulders back and stood up respectfully. He bowed to Lin Zi Yan then ran away clumsily.

Ye Wei was shocked to see Lin Zi Yan's influence outside Green Moon City.

Zhou Hou and the rest of the group had many questions in their minds, and they started to wonder what kind of person had just joined their group. They all looked towards Lin Zi Yan now and then, but they didn't dare talk to her. 'What was that? He's the golden child of the second biggest family in Frozen Sun City, how could a teenage girl scare him away?'

Now Ye Wei and Lin Zi Yan were left in peace. They could finally focus on training in the quiet. The golden flash in Ye Wei's Sentient was surging. It sensed danger within the red mists and this gave him an unsettled feeling that something monstrously fearsome was concealed within the depths of this valley.

He opened his eyes and looked at the mist. There was a voice in his head that told him he should not enter the BloodMist Valley if he

treasured his life. Ye Wei did treasure his life, but he just prioritized Ye Zhong's life above his own. 'Finding Welkin Leaves to save cousin Zhong, that's my mission.'

A few hours later, the lingering red mist started vibrating and pulsing rhythmically. It sounded like a colossal monster was breathing.

The red mist was quickly thinning revealing the vegetation and rocks in the valley.

"The mist is fading!"

"Get your asses up! The mist is fading!" The noise level escalated quickly.

It was logical that the campers were heated up as if they miss this window of opportunity they did not know when the next one would present itself.

The campers stirred up chaos as they entered the valley, but their speed sorted them into distinguishable groups. At the front were the seven star Warriors, led by Luo Wu Xue, Lu Chao, Hong Xun, and Yue Yao as they flew and glided ahead with their primal energy feathered wings which left swirls of red mist behind.

And far behind them were the six and five star Warriors kicking up dust and entering the valley in a flash. The rest were whizzing through overgrown trees and rugged rocks towards the valley akin a swarm of ants.

"Let's not wait!" Ye Wei and Lin Zi Yan stopped hesitating and followed the large crowd.

"This is..." Ye Wei noticed through trees and rocks that the red mist was dispersing as he headed towards the bottom of Bloodmist Valley. It was too thin to cover the breathtaking sight that froze him in place. His eyes were wide open and set on an enormous sculpture. It was a statue of a crouching beast that was almost a kilometer tall.

The delicately sculpted details of the beast made it feel alive. It was covered in scales from head to tail, and on its forehead were three long

horns. This beast's mouth was open, and there were runes carved on the inside of its mouth which was where the red mist originated from. Its sharp teeth looked bloodied from the reflecting redness around them.

It was obvious who was entering Bloodmist Valley for the first time. The newbies were all stunned and stood still, scared witless by the statute whereas the others were running straight towards the mouth of the beast. Only the experienced people dared to head right into it because they knew that was real entrance!

The first-timers saw how everyone else was rushing in and eventually followed once they overcame their fear.

Lin Zi Yan quietly mumbled to herself, and there was a deep purple flash in her clear eyes. "This is a Selenic spirit beast, are we at..." The statue reminded her about one of the old articles in her family's library.

"Let's go!" She said in a cautious tone. Lin Zi Yan was worried, but she did not let that affect their mission because Ye Zhong's life was at stake. They followed the rest of the group into the statue's mouth after the little pause.

Just as they entered, they were already facing an obstacle. There were around forty tunnels in front of them, and the running crowd came to a stop. Everyone was worryingly wondering which path they should take while the braver and experienced quickly disappeared into different tunnels.

Lou Chao noticed Lin Zi Yan's presence from a distance, and he quickly picked and entered a tunnel before she saw him.

Ye Wei's frustrated gaze was on the tunnels behind the thin mist. The tunnels all looked similar therefore everyone gave up on analyzing them and just entered a random tunnel as they could not tell which was the safe path.

As Lin Zi Yan was struggling, wondering which way to go, the golden flash appeared in Ye Wei's Sentient, "Zi Yan, the seventh tunnel from the right!" Out of all the tunnels, he could feel the strongest runic disturbance from the seventh.

“Everyone follow me!” Zhou Hou shouted at his team signaling them to enter one of the tunnels. He saw that Ye Wei and Lin Zi Yan were far behind and wanted to pick their own path, after exchanging a regretful look he decided to move on without the two. ‘If that’s what they want...’

“Yea!” Lin Zi Yan narrowed her eyes while looking at Ye Wei with a bit of doubt, but she trusted him, and he looked confident and determined, so they proceeded without further discussions.

The tunnel was lit up by slightly red swirling runic patterns on both sides. Ye Wei and Lin Zi Yan were not the only ones who picked this path. People were staring at the runes closely with greedy eyes. The swirls were arranged in a way that resembled the shape of a door.

Further down the tunnel there were swirls that had been broken open, and there was a stone house behind each of the openings. It was not a strange scene for some; the experienced cultivators just ran through the tunnel stopping now and then to see if they could forcefully break open the swirls. Everyone who managed to break them looked incredibly happy. They ran inside and searched for treasure.

“Rune Barriers...” Lin Zi Yan’s purple eyes looked a bit worried. She slightly frowned and mumbled because she had read about them before and knew how problematic they could be.

Chapter 64: Silver Moon

‘So that’s how it works! The treasures are hidden in the stone houses!’ Ye Wei figured out while observing the people around him. He also realized these rune barriers were the source of the runic disturbance he felt.

A fight broke out not far ahead of Ye Wei. The sound of Mystic stances exploding echoed through the tunnel, and he could see bodies flying everywhere.

“I will not show mercy to anyone who stands in my way! Not here!” A tall six star Warrior activated a Dark Lightning stance and bolts of black electricity wrapped around his body. The sound of thunder accompanied each step this human thunderstorm took as he charged towards a few men guarding the front of a rune barrier. He reached them quickly knocking quite a few of them out cold.

Some of the lower star level Warriors and Students around him were lucky enough to dodge the attack and ran away without looking back. They had lost their treasure to the tall Warrior, but they were not going to lose their lives too.

“Zi Yan, can we only break these barriers by force?” A golden flash shone through his eyes as Ye Wei scanned the whirls of runes around him and one of them in particular caught his attention.

Like all Mystic stances, rune barriers were composed of sequences of runes. This one was slightly different than the others. The patterns on it were spinning, and the energy seemed to be growing and spreading. Because it was located close to the entrance of the tunnel, many people had tried breaking it open, but it was still completely intact!

The paths of this rune barrier were very complex, and upon touching it, Ye Wei ‘s fingers were numbed by the enormous rebounding force. He stepped back and kept observing the barrier. The whirling patterns were making him dizzy, so he closed his eyes for a brief moment. Surprisingly when his eyes closed, he could feel the energy flow more clearly, and he

also felt the complex swirl's multiple pivots.

“Rune barriers are really just a simple form of runic seals. If you find the breakpoint of them, you don't need brute force to crack them. A trained Runemasters, for example, would be able to find these breakpoints easily. However, ordinary cultivators like us will have to find the weak spots and break these barriers by force from these spots.” Lin Zi Yan answered while observing the spinning rune's whirls around her, “Don't waste your time looking for the breakpoint, though, just see if you can find smaller thus weaker barriers, and I will break them open, did you forget I am a Warrior?” She added as she could see Ye Wei was caught up in looking at that one rune barrier.

Ye Wei nodded and stood back up. After getting a good footing, he closed his eyes again and placed his hand close to the rune barrier that knocked him down. He attempted to locate its weak spots. ‘It's a shame I am not a seven star Student yet!’ Ye Wei was a bit upset about having to rely on Lin Zi Yan again.

Just as he sighed, his Sentient flashed with a golden light and sent a surge of primal energy to his hands. The energy then found its way to the pivot points Ye Wei earlier discovered and took over the rune's flow movement. The whirls started to spin faster, and the rune barrier began to shine. Seconds after, it cracked open with a bang!

Lin Zi Yan was looking away, “I told you, you will have to use a stance to break the barri...” She heard the noise Ye Wei was making and turned around to see if he was hurt. But she froze in shock when she saw how the rune barrier was opened and a stone house was revealed behind the tunnel wall.

‘He's just a four star student! What was that? Could this be his rune consonance?’ Lin Zi Yan was not incorrect, Ye Wei's rune consonance allowed his Qi to adhere onto his body and beyond that more easily than anyone at his level or even higher for that matter.

Ye Wei pulled his hand back when he heard the bang. He relievingly exhaled and displayed a childish excitement on his smiling face. He never

thought he would be able to open it that easily.

“Zi Yan, let’s go in!” Ye Wei was a little forceful as he pulled Lin Zi Yan into the stone house before she could react.

Once they entered the stone house, the runes on the wall vibrated, and the barrier closed itself again.

“We don’t have much time!” Lin Zi Yan could sense the energy of a few powerful Warriors approaching, and if they were not quick while searching the house, a fight could break out when the Warriors arrive.

When Ye Wei opened another door to the stone house, a bright light blinded him. He narrowed his eyes and discovered the floor of the main room was tiled with extremely valuable cold-marrow jade. This caused the temperature to be significantly lower inside the main room, and there was a thin mist of water vapor above the floor.

Ye Wei and Lin Zi Yan looked around them and found out that they were surrounded by shelves and closets full of big and small containers.

Lin Zi Yan opened bottle after bottle and poured the pills into her palm for further inspection. She noticed that all the bottles contained the same pill. These pills were all glossy, each of them was about the size of a cherry, and they had a refreshing fragrance. There were also a few patterns printed on them that vaguely resembled a silver moon.

“Are these Silver Moon pills?” Lin Zi Yan turned her head to look at all the bottles around her, and she abruptly took in a deep breath of cold air; she was completely dumbfounded by the sight.

Regardless of cultivation, from Students to renowned returned prime Warriors, body strength is always the foundation to any type of training. That’s why quencher pills were so sought after.

‘I didn’t think these exist anymore!’ Silver Moon pills were around five times as effective as Fiery Sun Quenchers, and its fabled formula was lost in time; therefore, the pills were thought to be extinct!

While the rare Fiery Sun Quenchers were known to be the best quencher pills available on the market, very, very few powerful families

and martial artists were rumoured to have access to the secret formulas for and, stocks of other high-quality pills and potions that were reserved for personal and family use, Silver Moon pills were one such pill.

These Silver Moon pills can easily fetch ten thousand silver each at auction, and by Lin Zi Yan's visual estimation there were a few hundred of these pills in the room.

This room was worth more than a Big Three family's wealth that had been accumulated through generations. But their rarity can not really be measured with money as they will ultimately be used for a greater cause than numbers and luxuries.

Lin Zi Yan was from a wealthy background and she didn't really care about money, but she couldn't ignore these pills. "Ye Wei I will guard the entrance; meanwhile, you have to collect all these pills!" Not knowing what they were, Ye Wei just stood there shivering in the cold.

"Okay!" Ye Wei nodded, and took out the interspatial bag he had acquired earlier while starting to collecting the pills.

"There are three hundred and eighty pills altogether. I'll split them up equally." Ye Wei smiled and handed the pills to Zi Yan. "Here is your one hundred and ninety pills."

Ye Wei was not sure what these pills were but judging from Lin Zi Yan's facial expression he could guess that they were valuable, 'If it's valuable I should share it with her! I wouldn't be here if she didn't lead the way.'

"Little Wei, about the portion you just gave me... Do you know how much these pills are worth? Lin Zi Yan spoke to Ye Wei's innocent smiling face.

"How much are they worth? What has that got to do with anything?" Ye Wei shrugged and asked casually. 'If it wasn't for you, Zi Yan, I wouldn't have become Master Yi's apprentice and my family would not even exist today. Whatever they are worth doesn't really matter...'

"Okay then! Thank you very much!" Lin Zi Yan's lips curled into a smile, and although with her wealth she could get all the pills she wanted, she

was still touched by Ye Wei's gesture and kind heart.

After handing over the pills, Ye Wei started collecting the cold-marrow jade on the floor; they were just floor tiles in this house, but they are worth quite a bit outside.

A few banging noises came from the corridor, and the house was shaken. Someone was attacking the barrier from the outside, just as Lin Zi Yan expected. If she wasn't there to block the entrance with a stance, they would have already entered the stone house.

Ye Wei and Lin Zi Yan gave each other the same look, both of them could feel that the intruders were strong, and they had to get ready for a fight.

“Bang! Bang!”

The stone house was shaken a couple more times, and Lin Zi Yan's defensive stance was neutralized with a rumbling noise.

Four silhouettes appeared behind the dusty entrance, and they slowly entered the room then scanned around. They could feel the cold and see the jade tiles. The jade was not just a luxurious decoration, this was a pill room. The temperature was lowered intentionally to keep the bottles of pills in peak condition.

There was no pills in sight, all they could see was a boy and a girl. Their pupils dilated and their greedy glare intensified; all eye bloodshot eyes were now on Lin Zi Yan and Ye Wei.

“Give us the pills, and we will spare your lives!” All four of them were wearing light blue robes and blocking the entrance like a blue wall. Seeing that all four of them were Warriors, and knowing that Lin Zi Yan's defensive stance would take more than one person to neutralize, they knew it would be a tough fight.

Chapter 65: Bulwark

From the surprise of acquiring the valuable pills to facing the four Warriors, Ye Wei's countenance changed dramatically, and judging by the pressure he could sense, each of them were stronger than himself.

Handing over the valuable pills was out of the question, and Ye Wei did not reach for the pills in his interspatial bag, he was looking for the Mystic scrolls. His small movements did not escape Lin Zi Yan's eyes, she held Ye Wei's hand in place and slightly shook her head.

Lin Zi Yan then turned to look at the four warriors, and a flash of purple appeared in her eyes which helped her read their cultivation level. She could tell their cultivation in one glance. The two of them in the middle were five star Warriors whereas the other two on each side were four star Warriors.

Without warning, the four star Warriors quickly stepped forward and lifted their hands as strings of glittering light came out of their fingers. "Give us the pills!"

"In your dreams!" Lin Zi Yan grunted. Her will-force and Qi rushed out of her body simultaneously towards her finger using this she finished drawing a sequence of runes before the four star Warriors could.

"You asked for this! Don't blame us if you die!" The Warriors shouted, and they flicked their fingers releasing two dark, three-inch rune daggers towards Ye Wei and Lin Zi Yan. They penetrated the cold air in the room and parted the thin mist above the floor into three sections while cracking the jade tiles.

The daggers were homing in; they got close enough for Ye Wei to feel how sharp the rune daggers' edges were.

This was the moment Lin Zi Yan was waiting for. She placed her hand on Ye Wei's shoulder then injected Qi into the rune sequence. The stance activated and a cloud of light appeared around her.

"Shadowshift!"

The stance turned Ye Wei and Lin Zi Yan into shadows while leaving holograms of the two where they stood. With a burst of speed, they escaped the stone house before any of the four Warriors noticed.

The piercing rune daggers went through the holograms and landed on the wall behind them. "That stance was not a shield those are holograms!" But they realized what happened too late and the four blue robed Warriors' smiles dissolved. Blinded by rage, they then started to hysterically scream while searching the house for Ye Wei and Lin Zi Yan. They had completely eliminated the possibility of them escaping the house as they thought the door was well guarded.

They started arguing and blaming each other, and the shouting was shaking the house and echoed into the tunnel. None of them could get over the fact that a girl and a skinny boy got away from them so easily with their treasure, the resentment was maddening.

"Zi Yan, what stance was that?" Ye Wei asked Zi Yan as they blended into the crowd in the tunnel heading deeper into the Bloodmist catacombs.

"Mid-level Spirit stance Shadowshift, it's not anything fancy really. Would you like to learn it? When you're a seven star Student, I will teach you it!" Lin Zi Yan said laughingly at Ye Wei's shocked face. He was still trying to figure out the mechanics of the Shadowshift stance.

"Yea!" Ye Wei nodded without the slightest hesitation. The stance was not a powerful one, but its practicality made it a valuable asset for whoever could master it. It was usable both offensively and defensively, and of course for escaping as Zi Yan just demonstrated.

There are billions of stances, each one of them takes a lot of practice to master, and each one of them was invented for a special niche. A common cultivator could master around forty stances during his whole life; therefore, it was wise to pick up something he saw a use for.

"Yea that would be nice, but I need to get to seven star level quickly!" Ye Wei took a Silver Moon pill out of his bag, then put it into his mouth. The pill melted in his mouth and entered his body as a warm surge of energy

found its way into his meridians then traveled to his Sentient.

Lin Zi Yan took a Silver Moon pill too. Although it's a common practice to sit down and cultivate after taking quencher pills to absorb the energy efficiently, they could also use their effects to move around quicker thus increasing the chance of them finding what they needed in the tunnels.

Ye Wei's body was still taking in the pill's effects despite being on the move which strengthening his physique. Ye Wei absorbed only about thirty percent of the Silver Moon pill's effect, and his dantian and Sentient were rumbling more vigorously than when he took the Fiery Sun Quencher.

He was overjoyed, but he didn't show that on his face. 'I can become a five star Student in a day with the help of these pills. Although I might not be able to use stances, I can still try to create my own and refine them to improve my Sentient!'

The three meters wide tunnel was a mess. People were swarming in and out of the stone houses on the sides, and there were brawls everywhere. With such proximity, it was impossible not to know when others had found treasure, and it was unavoidable people would fight over them. Laws and rules don't really apply in places like Bloodmist Valley.

Ye Wei and Lin Zi Yan, however, did not need to involve themselves in the madness, for ordinary people it was not an easy thing to crack the rune barriers. The couple worked out a system; Lin Zi Yin was responsible for creating smoke screens with her stances and general security while Ye Wei would crack the barriers and take what was inside the stone houses. Within a few hours, Ye Wei's Interspatial pouch was filled with treasures and rare goods.

They came across a wide variety of herbs, pills, medicines, and even found some Qi crystals, but they couldn't find any Welkin Leaves.

The tunnel went deep underground. The length of it meant it was impossible to search each and every stone houses, and bearing that in mind Lin Zi Yan was starting to think they should go deeper into the tunnel where the area might be less contested. Then they could take their

time searching instead of having to worry about defending themselves all the time.

But she was not the first nor the only person with such idea. A few hundred more experienced Warriors were already further down the tunnel. Lin Zi Yan and Ye Wei found themselves in a pretty much empty section of the tunnel.

A rune barrier vibrated then Ye Wei and Lin Zi Yan came through the wall finished searching another stone house. “Nothing too special here either!” The term special has since lost its meaning because the things they got their hands on were incredibly valuable, but just were not what they were here for.

The trip would be pretty much meaningless unless they found what Master Yi told them they needed to get ahold of.

“We should head towards the end of the tunnel and see what’s happening down there, and hope there is still something left for us.” Lin Zi Yan said slightly nervously as she realized they might have been too late.

‘It was definitely a statue of a Selenic spirit beast, even a ton of Welkin Leaves cannot compare to the real treasure we could find here if this place is what I think it is.’ There was a ghostly purple fire in Lin Zi Yan’s eyes as her mind wandered. ‘If Ning City sent people here, they would most likely be after those.’ It was getting hard for Ye Wei to catch up as she was running quicker and quicker.

About an hour passed, and the tunnel was starting to widen the pair had been running at Ye Wei’s full speed this entire time. Their path was getting brighter, and they started to hear noises echoing in the tunnel which indicated they were reaching the end. They looked at each other while slowing down their pace making sure their steps weren’t heard.

The tunnel led them to a spacious hall. It was at least a few times wider than the Ye family arena. All the tunnels actually led to the same place like streams and rivers flowing into the sea.

Lin Zi Yan had a glance at the place and noticed there were at least

three thousand people who made it here.

Luo Wu Xue, Lu Chao, Hong Jun, and Xue Yao were right on the frontlines. They stood in the middle of the hall right in front of a hundred meter tall round rune shield that protected the temple from any external disturbance.

The temple was not the only thing under the shiny shield. A lot of weapons, shields, and armors were suspended in mid-air, and a lot of these goods had a shine on them that indicated they weren't ordinary artifacts.

The people in the hall were too focused on the shield, so Ye Wei and Lin Zi Yan snuck in unnoticed. They were discussing how to break through the rune shield. In their minds, they were clear that as long as the shield stood, they didn't have a chance to lay their hands on those treasures. Now it was the time to work together instead of killing each other.

The strongest Warriors on the scene including Lou, Lu, Hong, and Xue adjusted their positioning and started drawing runes in the air.

Fire, ice, wind, Qi swords, and spirit beasts crashed into the shield in a matter of seconds. They all focused their fire on where they estimated the weak spot to be. But the light shield bounced the attacks off instantaneously.

The arranged attack created some ripples on the shield, but that was all. The rune shield was not damaged in the slightest.

"That's pretty far off..." The purple light in Lin Zi Yan's eyes intensified, and she sighed and shook her head.

The effort was repeated by the group of elite Warriors at the hall, but the situation remained the same. The only difference was now the Warriors looked tired and drained.

Chapter 66: Prodigies

Not only did the light shield kept them from reaching the treasures they could see levitating in the air, but it also blocked the pathways that led towards the depths of this Bloodmist Labyrinth.

“Didn’t somebody say that the Ning City folks are here with us? Where are they?”

“What should we do now?”

This was the furthest anyone has been into the labyrinth in decades, and if someone did not disable the shield, then this would be the end of the expedition. People started to speculate and try to figure a way to push further into the mysterious depths of the Bloodmist Labyrinth.

Lin Zi Yan scanned the hall, and she sensed quite a lot of outstanding individual, but she knew that none of them would be strong enough to break the enormous runic barrier, not even Luo Wu Xue, who was the strongest.

“These attacks mean nothing. The only chance of breaking through is to have multiple people who know how to focus all their power onto the barrier’s weak spot while striking it simultaneously! It would only take a few strong Warriors to get the job done!”

Lin Zi Yan was getting a little bit frustrated because she knew she couldn’t break the shield on her own. She was under the suspicion that Ye Wei could actually open the rune barrier without breaking a sweat by fiddling with the breakpoint like he had on the earlier rune barriers. However, she was not going to let him draw any attention to himself, especially not here at the Bloodmist Valley.

‘Whoever set this rune barrier up must be a very, very strong cultivator...’ Ye Wei was startled by the rune shield. As he observed the rune and energy flow of it, something became clear to him.

‘When the creator of the shield set it up, he didn’t make it hard to break; the complexity of this shield vastly exceeds the strength of it. Had

he put more Qi into the shield, it might actually take a Prime to break through!’

This was an inspiring experience for Ye Wei. He had never seen a rune sequence this complex before. The shield taught him a thing or two about rune synergies and combinations, but he was still a bit confused as to why the creator did not build the defense system to its fullest potential.

Just as Ye Wei was deep in his own world, an aqua blue light intensified at the exit of one of the tunnels while a sharp noise of something breaking through the air at a high speed was getting louder.

Seconds after, a blue flash shot out of the tunnel into the hall which then levitated above the thousands. It silenced the crowd as everyone was in awe and trying to figure out what the blue light was.

Ye Wei was no exception; he lifted his head to see a fading blue light. As the light died down, a hovering ancient, ice-blue sword appeared in front of his eyes and on the sword stood a teenager wearing a blue robe.

He didn’t look a day older than sixteen, and he was standing straight with his hands behind his back. His long hair came to rest as he stopped mid-air.

This blue robed teenager looked down calmly on the crowd below. “That’s Mo Ya from Ning City!” Luo Mu Xue’s pupils dilated, and his face twitched, he remembered this face.

‘Why is he here? The treasures in the Bloodmist Valley shouldn’t be that attractive to him...’ All of the four strongest group leaders shared the same thought; they were agitated by Mo Ya’s presence.

“Mo Ya?” Ye Wei turned to Lin Zi Yan. He could guess that Mo Ya was a renown person but having lived in Green Moon City his whole life, he had no idea who this teenager was – him who silenced the crowd of thousands without speaking a word. Back in his junior class at South Star Academy all they talked about was what was happening in their local city.

“Mo Ya is one of the four strongest teenagers in Ning City; he is only sixteen years old, but he’s already a ten star Warrior. He is famous for

beating another well known ten star Warrior with a single sword strike in a dual!

‘Sixteen years old and as strong as my uncles...’ Ye Wei was astonished by how big the world was. He never imagined that talents like this existed.

“That sword under his feet...” Ye Wei was curious about the hovering sword.

“Medium grade three stars Mystic Arm.” Li Zi Yan knew what Ye Wei was going to ask and answered calmly.

“What?” Ye Wei eyes widened. “Are you sure?” He could not believe a teenager would carry such a valuable treasure around. “Is he not afraid of getting attacked and mugged?” He frowned and whispered in an envious tone. He was afraid that Mo Ya was going to hear him.

“With that sword, he can fight condensed prime Warriors to a draw anytime, and maybe even come out on top. People who are capable of mugging him don’t really have a reason to. Unless, they feel like declaring war against the Mo family; who are one of the four biggest families in Ning City.” Lin Zi Yan replied.

“Don’t be intimidated little Wei, you’re a talented boy. I believe that you will be able to catch up with them sooner or later!” Lin Zi Yan read Ye Wei’s facial expressions like an open book.

“Ha Ha Ha! Mo Ya, do you enjoy showing off in front of a large group of trash? That’s classy!” A booming voice caught the attention of the crowd as they were admiring Mo Ya’s godly aura.

This loud voice echoed through the hall, and some of the weaker cultivators in the crowd turned as pale as a sheet and started bleeding from their ears. Ye Wei was affected too. The thundering laugh shook him inside and out. Lin Zi Yan saw that and therefore placed her small hand on his shoulder to strengthen him with a surge of Qi. This lifted the pressure off his body, and his face slowly regained color.

‘I thought you just broke into the Warrior ranks not long ago... Are you

hiding from me?' Ye Wei could see that Lin Zi Yan was not affected by the Qi powered voice at all while the stronger Warriors who were trying to break the shield were struggling to even stand up straight.

As the laugh died down people started to look towards the tunnels where it came from. A golden flash shot out of the tunnel's exit where everyone was looking, as another overbearing presence entered the hall.

While Mo Ya's presence was cold and elegant, this man's entrance was more violent. The crowd was already afraid of him before he showed his face. The golden light dimmed before everyone's eyes, and a muscular teenager with rugged hair revealed himself. He was levitating in the air and holding a golden spear.

He arrogantly glanced around, and his gaze itself was like a spear that penetrated people's souls. "Jin Yan!" Luo Wu Xue knew this gaze, and it caused him to shiver nervously as he tightened his grip. Drops of cold sweat dripped from his hand onto the ground. Being number one in Frozen Sun City caused Luo Wu Xue to be very prideful but standing in front of these two from Ning City he felt worthless. He was breathing heavily while shaking.

"First, it was the Selenic beast statue... Now these two are here! I think that confirms it. This is probably the Frost King's tomb!" Lin Zi Yan mumbled.

"The Jin's let you out of Searing Valley? And you were given Burning Gold, looks like the geezers in your family have great expectations from you!" Mo Ya's eyes stopped on the ten-meter long spear then at Jin Yan as he indifferently chuckled.

"You have Autumn's Grace with you too. It looks like we were both sent on the same mission, huh?" Jin Yan said in an unfriendly tone as he flexed his firm muscles and stared at the sword under Mo Ya's feet.

"Well, I feel kind of lucky that they sent you here. I can't imagine how much fun I would have, and how long it will take to break this rune shield if I have to work with these people!" Mo Ya shrugged and replied sarcastically.

Jin Yan's eyes followed Mo Ya's as they looked at the rune barrier. They had a concerned expression on their face as they felt the energy that it was emitting, and although they were pretty confident about breaking it, they weren't sure if they were ready to face whoever was powerful enough to set this shield up.

Chapter 67: Iron Talisman

“Let’s cut the small talk; we need to break the runic barrier together!”

Jin Yan stared at the light shield, and his eyes lit up with enthusiasm as he thought about the item he was told to retrieve from the depths of Bloodmist Valley. He extended his arms and started swinging his spear in a circle, injecting a large amount of Qi into Burning Gold activating the stance within.

The runes on the tip of the spear started to shine, and the bright light intensified transforming into a thirty-meter long spectral spear. It then shot out towards the light shield.

Like Mo Ya’s Autumn’s Grace, Jin Yan’s Burning Gold was a three-star medium-grade Mystic Arm. The stance he just activated was a peak-level Myst stance, and for the Students and Warriors in the hall seeing Jin Yan using a stance as powerful as their own patriarch’s stances was quite shocking. They admired the power, but at the same time were afraid of it.

The golden spectral spear was giving off a pressure wave that radiated in all directions, and suddenly everyone felt like there was a rock pressing on their head making it hard to breathe.

The spectral spear gave off a screeching rumble as it broke through the air, even the roof was shaken and pieces of stones rained down.

“Is it my turn now?” Mo Ya, who was still standing on his sword, said as he channeled Qi without moving a muscle. The energy he emitted created a small whirlwind around him, causing his hair to flow with the wind as he transferred his Qi down to his feet thus activating the stance in the sword.

Upon activation, Autumn’s Grace shone with a bright green light and sequences of runes rushed out of the blade forming an enormous cyan-colored spirit sword. The sword then tore through the air towards the shield with unstoppable momentum.

People had mixed feelings about these two attempting to break the

barrier. On the one hand, they wanted it broken so they could progress further into the labyrinth, but on the other they didn't want their leaders to look like idiots. It will be humiliating if just these two from Ning City could finish a job they had been working on for hours.

Ye Wei's eyes were set on the two fearsome stances in the air like everyone else. The screeches from the spear and the sword were the only audible sound in the hall as people were quietly witnessing the stances rushing towards the massive rune barrier.

The heat emitted by the stances warmed the air creating a ripple effect. It was this moment when the light shield reacted as if it could sense a threat and lit up brighter.

It didn't just get brighter, but the runes within started to come alive as they rotated around and strengthened the shield.

Jin Yan's golden spirit spear landed first, and its tip crushed onto one small point close to the middle of the shield. Its force was so focused that it pierced a tiny hole into the seemingly unbreakable shield. The impact sent ripples across the shield causing its strength to weaken.

The shield stood as the spear faded; it was still unbroken, but now its shine was dimmer. Just as the spear disappeared, Mo Ya's stance struck on the same weak point Ji Yan's spirit spear just left on the barrier.

Slowly but sure the sword pierced through the shield. Mo Ya seized the opportunity, and he calmly looked at the spirit sword and grunted. As his grunt echoed in the hall, the spirit sword shattered on his command. It turned into thousands of little swords that spun like a tornado as they expanded and ate the shield. It wasn't long before the shield lost its structural strength and shattered into pieces.

People's eyes went widened when they saw how easy Mo Ya and Jin Yan broke the shield. But their appreciation was short lived. After a few cheers, they shifted from looking at what's left of the shield to the treasures behind it.

Most of the levitating treasures were held in the air by the shield's energy, and once the barrier broke all the items starting falling to the

ground. All except ten of them. These dazzling pieces were floating by their own energy.

Seven of them glowed black, and three of them glowed green. “Mystic Arms!” The crowd went wild. They were here for treasures, but they didn’t imagine they would see medium grade Mystic Arms.

Crazed with greed, people were breathing heavily, staring at the Mystic Arms aggressively and seemingly ready to take other’s lives for the treasures.

Lin Zi Yan was a bit calmer than the others. Her eyes were set on the leftmost medium grade Mystic Arm, a purple-gold chiffon cloak. It had tiny runes flowing on each thread of the garment.

While everyone else had their eyes on the ten Mystic Arms in the air, Ye Wei couldn’t take his eyes off a rusty little iron talisman that fell to the ground. His Sentient started to glow as it reacted to the sight of it. It filled his body with Qi and will-force.

The iron talisman looked beat up and old, and it was just quietly laying on the floor. Nobody was paying the piece of junk any mind.

“What is this iron talisman?” Ye Wei widened his eyes in shock. He couldn’t believe his body would react just by looking at this ordinary item. Supposedly, it was more attractive than the Mystic Arms to him.

“I have to have this!” Ye Wei mumbled while he clenched his fist. He couldn’t quite explain the desire, but he was hopelessly drawn to that rusty trinket.

There were a lot of powerful fighters in the hall, but most of them had their eyes set on the Mystic Arms, almost nobody noticed what Ye Wei saw. That means it was actually possible for him to acquire the item. Furthermore, he was even ready to use his mystic scrolls if that’s what it took.

The atmosphere in the hall became a little strange. Moments ago they were united by the same cause wanting to break the shield together, but now that the treasures were within everyone’s reach they started to keep

a distance from each other as they saw everyone as competition instead of comrades.

Without Jin Yan and Mo Ya's presence, the crowd would have already turned into a brawl. People were afraid of the two from Ning City; thus, they waited for them to make the first move.

"Ha, you guys are pretty respectful!" Mo Ya looked down to find the crowd was anticipating him and Jin Yan's action.

"What a shame! If these trash actually dared to go wild, I would have an excuse to crush some skulls!" Jin Yan said indifferently. Although he was a bloodthirsty teenager who didn't really care about anyone in the hall, he restrained himself from unnecessary bloodshed.

The crowd knew Mo Ya and Jin Yan could easily wipe them out, and as much as they wanted the treasure they valued their lives more. That respect and fear might just have saved their lives.

"These three medium grade Mystic Arms are off limits! But the rest... you guys can fight for them if you wish!" Jin Yan chuckled and shouted to the crowd. "Go!"

As Jin Yan's words echoed in the hall, the greed-crazed crowd ran towards the treasures, and their bloodshot eyes were set on the seven low-grade Mystic Arms.

Lin Zi Yan's eyes darted to Ye Wei, " Little Wei, you must follow me be no more than a hundred meters away. I have to get that Mystic Arm; it cannot fall into anyone's hands but mine!" She said calmly as she channeled her energy, and her will-force rushed out of her Sentient to her entire body. Her Qi wrapped tightly around her skin, and she appeared to be covered by a layer of purple flame.

"Zi Yan, don't worry about me; I have to do something here!" Ye Wei didn't want to burden Lin Zi Yan, and she looked determined. Furthermore, the iron talisman was nowhere close to where Lin Zi Yan was heading.

Ye Wei knew Lin Zi Yan was hiding her true strength, but he couldn't

imagine she would actually go and compete with Jin Yan and Mo Ya for a medium grade Mystic Arms.

Lin Zi Yan was in a hurry, and although she cared about Ye Wei like no other, she had to get to Jin Yan and Mo Ya before it was too late. "Please take care of yourself! If you find yourself in any kind of danger, just use the scrolls!" She knew if Ye Wei were to use the scrolls, he would be relatively safe if he wasn't crazy enough to pick a fight with someone as strong as Mo Ya or Jin Yan.

"I understand! Just do what you have to!" Ye Wei answered and leaped towards the iron talisman.

Lin Zi Yan's body disappeared. She used the Shadowshift stance to get herself close to the medium grade Mystic Arms.

A brawl broke out as Ye Wei and Lin Zi Yan headed separate ways, the hall was filled with the smell of blood. As Ye Wei expected, the whole crowd was heading towards the seven low-grade Mystic Arms, and only a few of them were actually running towards the less desired items on the ground.

"I've got this!" Ye Wei was relieved that there were no Warriors on the way to contest him. He clenched his fist and transferred some Qi to his feet to speed up.

Although he had no idea what the rusty talisman was, anything that could excite his Sentient would not be ordinary.

Chapter 68: Purple Chiffon

Ye Wei looked around him, and there were three Students heading in the same direction he was.

“Get out of the way!” They said furiously in unison aware that they were in no position to contest with the others for the Mystic Arms, so they settled for the idea of getting some ordinary items instead.

As they approached, Ye Wei threw three consecutive punches towards them in a flash. Although none of them connected, the Students were forced to take a few steps back to dodge the fierce strikes.

“How dare you!”

“You are just a Student, and you’re picking a fight with us three?” The three-star Students channeled their Qi, which turned their skin green and with their empowered green fists they stuck ruthlessly towards Ye Wei.

The fists simultaneously flew towards Ye Wei’s back, left shoulder, and right arm from behind him. He felt the approaching threat and bent his body forward to dodge the attacks as he launched himself forward towards the iron talisman.

Ye Wei just wanted the talisman, and he didn’t want to fight so he threw the punches just to buy himself some extra time.

Ye Wei’s evasion did not surprise the three Students, but the item that he launched himself towards did. They couldn’t believe he was after a rusty piece of trash.

They looked at each other and laughed, “Just leave him then!” The leader of the three shouted as they ran towards the single edged sword lying not far from the iron talisman. ‘What an idiot, you could have taken this weapon instead.’ He chuckled as he got his hand on the piece of well forged rare metal; it was worth at least a few thousand silver.

“It’s mine!” Ye Wei shouted as his hand was three inches from his target. He felt the cold iron on his fingertips, and he also felt something sharp approaching from behind.

It was a familiar feeling. Three sharp Qi daggers tore through the air towards his hand at a fearsome speed, and luckily for Ye Wei, he noticed them before it was too late. He swiftly pulled his hand backwards.

Ye Wei didn't lose his hand, but the daggers did graze it. He held his bleeding hand and looked towards where the attacks came from. "It's you!" Ye Wei narrowed his eyes. He recognized those faces, 'The people from the first stone house we had entered.'

He knew he was in for trouble when he saw the four Warriors who were staring at him furiously. This time, Lin Zi Yan was not by his side. He immediately reached for his interspatial bag; if they make another move, Ye Wei would use a scroll without hesitation.

"You are four Warriors, why aren't you guys after the Mystic Arms instead of bullying me?" He knew how valuable the scrolls were, and although he would use them if the situation requires him to, he was still trying to talk himself out of this mess.

"Because we can! Now give us the pills you took from the stone house then we will leave you be!" The strongest one of them said with a greedy smile on his face.

They considered fighting for the Mystic Arms, but as they were deciding if it was worth it to risk their lives fighting the stronger Warriors, they spotted Ye Wei. 'It's safer to get the pills off this weakling!' They all had the same thought, and they were actually still angry that Ye Wei and Lin Zi Yan got away from them; therefore, they opted for the less risky course of action.

"So I guess you aren't going to back off?" Ye Wei grabbed the iron talisman with his right hand and took a green scroll out of the bag with his left.

"A Myst scroll!" One of the Warriors told the rest of the group as his eyes caught the green glow. His friends' eyes widened, and their smiles disappeared.

'How did he get a hold of this scroll?' They were starting to be afraid, 'We can't deal with a Myst stance, and if the scroll was given to him by

his family then we really can't deal with the consequences of hurting him if news of it got out of the valley... That girl from earlier was probably his bodyguard!'

"Sorry! This is just a misunderstanding! We'll be on our way." They were smart enough not to start a fight with someone with a powerful background. After a brief apology, they turned away to see if they could find other treasures in the chaos. "We can't go back empty-handed! Let's go."

"Phew!" Ye Wei was relieved. He was glad that the one use Mystic scroll protected him more efficiently than he expected. He then looked at the cold iron talisman and ground his teeth, 'I don't know what you can do, but you're mine!' Just as he was about to inspect the item, he remembered that Lin Zi Yan was still out there. He threw the talisman in his bag and started looking for her.

Not willing to be involved in the crazy brawl, Ye Wei retreated to the edge of the hall.

'Where are you!' He was worried for Lin Zi Yan as it looked like she was going for the medium-grade Arms where Jin Yan and Mo Ya were. 'I know she is very strong, but both Jin Yan and Mo Ya are ten-star Warriors armed with powerful weapons whereas Zi Yan is unarmed!' He started to panic because he couldn't locate her in the chaos.

As Ye Wei was jumping and struggling to get a glimpse of what was happening at the front, Zi Yan's Shadowshift stance had already got her through the crowd to the frontlines where Luo Wu Xue, Lu Chao, Hong Xun, and Xue Yao were, but she was not planning to stop there. While those four were after the low-grade Arms, she wanted more.

In the air, Jin Yan and Mo Ya were staring at each other wondering if the other was going to back off.

"There are three Mystic Arms and two of us. How do we share them?" Jin Yan clenched his fist and broke the silence.

"Finders keepers!" Mo Ya replied calmly; he was not intimidated by Jin Yan's flamboyance.

Although these items were not what they came to Bloodmist Valley for, they were not going to just give them up.

“Exactly what I wanted to hear!” Jin Yan chuckled and activated the stance in his spear, but this time, he held the spear close to his body letting the runes from the Mystic Arm wrap around him.

He and the spear merged together momentarily, and then he flew down towards the three medium-grade arms. Meanwhile, Mo Ya on his sword flew swiftly in the same direction. The pressure wave from the two descending Warriors was felt by everyone within a radius of a hundred meters. All but five Warriors were knocked back by the Ning City duo. Unsurprisingly they were Lin Zi Yan, Luo Wu Xue, Lu Chao, Hong Xun, and Xue Yao.

Lu Chao and Xue Yao were only seven-star Warriors, and their faces went pale as they met the pressure wave. They channeled their Qi to strengthen their bodies and raised their arms hoping to deflect some of the impact. Sadly, their defenses didn't do much as their feet were pushed deep into the ground. Hong Xun, on the other hand, used a stance just as the impact swept by; the sequence of runes formed a golden bell that shielded him, leaving him relatively unharmed.

Only Lin Zi Yan and Luo Wu Xue could take the impact without too much effort.

‘I am the best student in my school! And the strongest young man in my city! Looks like the world is much bigger than I thought it was’ Luo Wu Xue thought as his face turned pale. It was now far whiter than it usually was. Despite the pressure, the Qi on his feet kept him steady.

Lu Wu Xue turned to look at Lin Zi Yan, and she was standing strong as if nothing happened. There was not a drop of sweat on her face nor was there the slightest trace of panic. Her whole body was covered in a purple flame, and her eyes shone violet as well.

‘I’ve been overestimating myself this whole time.’ He turned around and didn’t even try to go for the less contested low-grade arms. ‘I will challenge you two when I become stronger!’ Luo Wu Xue was shamed by

Jin Yan and Mo Ya's power. He swore to train harder and left the hall without looking back.

"I underestimated you." She whispered as she admired Luo Wu Xue's judgment. It was a wise move to swallow his pride as he could actually lose his life if he decided to compete with her, Jin Yan, and Mo Ya.

While he turned away, Jin Yan and Mo Ya were already next to the Mystic Arms. Jin Yan picked up the compass on the right while Mo Ya took the feather fan in the middle. Once they each took an item, they simultaneously cast their attention onto the purple chiffon cloak.

Chapter 69: Deeper

Mo Ya and Jin Yan reached out for the cloak at the same time but Mo Ya, being slightly stronger of the two, reached it before Jin Yan could.

Mo Ya's lips curled into a smug smile, and as he was about to grab the cloak, a cheeky grin appeared on Jin Yan's face. Suddenly, a green scroll appeared in Jin Yan's hand.

He tore the Mystic scroll and released a thousand runes long sequence in the air. The runes shone, spun, and transformed into a black mink. Its fur was shiny, and there was static electricity on its hair covering its body. This was nothing other than a terrifying Lightning Mink.

Famed for its speed, the Lightning Mink was a powerful Myst stance that even condensed prime Warriors could not easily deal with due to the runic mink's agility.

Just as Mo Ya's hand touched the purple chiffon cloak, the runic mink appeared in front of him and bit him hard with its razor sharp teeth. The bite together with being shocked by the mink caused him to loosen his grip. But the mink didn't stop attacking. It quickly climbed up Mo Ya's sleeve and continued biting and scratching him as he took a step back attempting to rid himself of the mink by shaking his body.

Mo Ya's face turned ashen after shaking off the runic creature with great effort. He took a few steps away making sure he was safe from the mink's relentless attacks at least momentarily. Although the electric mink was from a scroll and weaker than its true form when used by a condensed prime Warrior, the speedy strikes even weakened were not to be taken casually, not even for Mo Ya.

"You are not stingy at all! Are you?" Mo Ya didn't expect Jin Yan to use a scroll that cost at least a hundred thousand silver.

"It's just a scroll! I'm getting a medium-grade Mystic Arm in return. I think it is definitely worth it!" Jin Yan flicked his sleeves while laughed at Mo Ya and slowly reached for the purple-gold cloak.

Just as Jin Yan fingers touched the cloak, he heard a sweet voice. “This is my cloak!” Then a slender hand appeared in front of him, and one of the delicate fingers from this hand curled and flicked forward onto the back of Jin Yan’s hand.

When Lin Zi Yan’s finger landed on Jin Yan’s hand, he felt like his hand was struck by a bolt of lightning. His whole body shook, and he reflexly pulled his arm backwards.

The prideful smile on his face instantly disappeared. He looked down at his trembling hand and shouted, “Who are you!?” He couldn’t believe someone other than Mo Ya was strong enough to contest for these medium-grade Mystic Arms.

Jin Yan widened his eyes then cautiously hid his numb hand behind his back while staring at Lin Zi Yan. She was kneeling and folding the cloak up then put it in her bag. He tried to hide the fact that he was surprised, but seeing the person was a small girl he couldn’t accept his defeat.

All of this did not escape Mo Ya’s eyes as he got rid of the mink. He saw how Jin Yan was stopped by a discrete finger flick, and he too was surprised to see the intrusion of this unknown person. His eyes were fixed on her as she stood up. Just as he was confused trying to guess her identity, Mo Ya made a brief moment of eye contact with Lin Zi Yan.

When he saw her purple eyes, his face twitched. He gasped and went through shock, euphoria, and fear within seconds.

Without consulting Jin Yan, Mo Ya said, “Yea, you can take this cloak!” He took a deep breath and regained his cool. At this moment, Jin Yan’s opinion didn’t matter to him anymore.

“Bullshit! I broke the barrier with you Mo Ya! Why are you on her side? She didn’t even help us? Listen girl! You better hand the cloak back before I lose my temper!” Jin Yan said in a cold tone as he furiously stared at Lin Zi Yan. He was clearly annoyed by Mo Ya’s reaction.

‘I worked together with Mo Ya to break the shield and even used a medium-grade Mystic scroll to get this cloak, and you’re going to sneak up on me and take my treasure out of nowhere?! Do you have a death

wish?' Jin Yan knew that Lin Zi Yan was strong, but with his spear he was confident. He believed that he could take on anyone in this Bloodmist Labyrinth. 'I'm not afraid of anyone; I've fought condensed prime Warriors with this spear in my hand! I'm not going to let anyone disrespect me, especially not a girl!' Lin Zi Yan exposed Jin Yan's sensitive side.

"I would have broken the barrier myself, but you two just got to it first. Don't glorify yourself and make it sound like a harder task than it really was." Lin Zi Yan said coldly. She frowned and turned around to stare at Jin Yan.

The moment Lin Zi Yan's purple eyes set on Jin Yan, he felt like he was being strangled. He wanted to speak, but words just would not come out. His lips went pale and were shaking in awe when he saw the hue of her pupils.

"You are..." What Mo Ya said suddenly made sense to Jin Yan now that he could see Lin Zi Yan's eyes for himself. 'Mo Ya... Mo Ya was right. You can have the cloak.'

Everyone saw how Lin Zi Yan appeared out of nowhere and took on the infamous geniuses from Ning City. To take a medium-grade Mystic Arm off their hands by only using one finger, and then to have the advantage in a standoff with them... 'Are Mo Ya and Jin Yan afraid of her?! People don't just give medium-grade Mystic Arms away!'

The spectators were shocked and started to wonder where this girl was the whole time while everyone had been trying to break the shield. And that if she was strong enough to take things off Jin Yan's hands, how had she managed to keep such a low profile before.

"Correct me if I am wrong, but you two are not here for these Mystic Arms?" Lin Zi Yan clicked her fingers to interrupt Jin Yan from possibly revealing her identity. Then she shifted her focus to two paths at the back of the hall behind where the shield used to be.

After hearing what Lin Zi Yan said Jin Yan and Mo Ya went quiet. They looked at each other and narrowed their eyes. To Lin Zi Yan their frowns

were good enough answers. Medium-grade Arms were valuable, but comparing to what the Ning City duo were after in this Bloodmist Labyrinth, these items were nothing.

Seeing Mo Ya place his hand on the hilt of Autumn's Grace and Jin Yan tightening his grip on the spear, it became apparent to Lin Zi Yan that their generosity only went as far as handing her the cloak. It was obvious that they did not want to share the real treasure they sought.

The atmosphere became heavy, and all the cultivators who were close stopped fighting over the low-grade Mystic Arms and stepped away from Lin Zi Yan, Mo Ya, and Jin Yan. They could sense that a colossal fight could break out any second and did not want to become collateral damage. As the crowd quieted down, Ye Wei could finally see where Lin Zi Yan was, and he was worried sick seeing the three of them in a standoff.

Lin Zi Yan could see Ye Wei too. She looked at him then rolled her eyes slowly towards the direction of the exit, signaling that he should leave this place.

Then she turned back to Mo Ya and Jin Yan, "Is this what you want? A fight?" She asked with a beckoning smile on her face as the purple flame in her eyes burned brighter. "Let's play catch instead!" She calmly glared at Mo Ya and Jin Yan then turned around and ran towards the rightmost path that led into the depths of the labyrinth.

Her Shadowshift stance brought her to the path's entrance in no time, and the only thing that stopped her from proceeding was yet another barrier. She gently exhaled and blew on her right hand, coating it with a layer of purple Qi. The barrier softened at her touch, and she was walked right through it. 'Don't worry little Wei; I will get you what you need! Just get out here safe and remember to use your scrolls if you're in danger...'

Just as she went through the barrier, it lit up and became rigid again blocking the passage.

Ye Wei started to wonder what it was that drew Lin Zi Yan, Mo Ya, and Jin Yan's interest. He was just here for the Welkin Leaves and did not

expect he would be left alone by Lin Zi Yan.

Mo Ya released his tight grip and lowered his sword while he spoke to Jin Yan. "Interesting, I think us two may have to work together for the time being!" They both wanted to chase Lin Zi Yan but couldn't match her speed.

"Pfft! I want to see if people from that family are strong as rumored!" Jin Yan grunted and said pridefully. He followed Mo Ya towards the path to the right, and they walked through the barrier as effortlessly as Lin Zi Yan had.

As the three disappeared into the depths of the labyrinth, the cultivators in the hall started fighting again. The floor quickly became covered in blood, and if one were to fall to the ground, it would be the end for them.

Chapter 70: Effigies

On the far edge of the hall, Ye Wei was at a standstill worrying about Lin Zi Yan's safety after she disappeared down the path that led into the deeper parts of the labyrinth. He could tell that Mo Ya and Jin Yan could pose a threat to her if they decided to somehow work together against her.

Ye Wei could not stop thinking about it. Both of the Ning City Warriors possessed a medium-grade Mystic Arm. He wanted to follow her down the path, but he thought about the difference he could actually make and who would be protecting who if he was to join Lin Zi Yan in venturing deeper into the labyrinth.

'I've wasted too much time in the past... I will just burden her if I go in.' Ye Wei again became bitter as his mind wandered.

"I have to become a seven-star Student as soon as possible. Maybe there will be something in this labyrinth, pills or some kind of medicine that could help me get there." Ye Wei mumbled to himself. "When I can start creating and refining stances, I'm sure I will be able to catch up!" He clenched his fist determinedly.

'Should I really follow Zi Yan's advice and leave this place? She led me all the way here to Bloodmist Valley, and now she's heading even further in. She signaled me to leave, so I should trust her to find the Welkin Leaves, right? But I can't always rely on her. I can't hide behind her back when she takes all the risks!' The recent incidents with Lin Zi Yan made Ye Wei think of her as more than a friend; he could not help but overthink everything about her in his mind, 'I will wait here...'

"Kill him!"

"Those are mine! Drop it or I will end you!"

During the next two hours, yells and screams echoed in the hall as the brawls continued until more and more fighters fell. The floor was now covered with bodies and blood as the noise eventually died down.

After the chaos faded, the seven low-grade Mystic Arms found their new, exhausted owners. With Luo Mu Xue gone and Lin Zi Yan, Jin Yan, and Mo Ya deeper in the labyrinth, Lu Chao, Hong Xun, and Xue Yao were the strongest left in the hall; therefore, they got the most treasure of all the survivors.

The group led by Zhao Hou also got a nice cut of the treasure.

Now that the hall had quieted down, the survivors finally had the time to look around. They started to think back and realized how brutal and barbaric they have been. So much so that some of them were actually scared of themselves as they didn't know such a bloodthirsty side of themselves existed.

A lot of cultivators with great potential died that day. Most of the survivors were at least five-star Warriors or above, but it wasn't only the survivors' capabilities that kept them alive. In the dog eat dog world luck was more important than strength.

Clarity hit some of the survivors, and after experiencing the bloodbath first hand a lot of them were mentally traumatized. They chose to leave the labyrinth just for some peace and quiet. When all of the fighting was completely over there was only around one thousand people left in the hall.

Ye Wei watched all the skirmishes at the edge of the hall. He did not enjoy seeing the bloodshed at all, but he was calm as he witnessed everything. 'I have to stay here. I am not going to leave this labyrinth until I get my hands on some Welkin Leaves, or at least, I will wait here until Zi Yan returns safely!'

The silence was brief as the people who stayed behind prepared for more bloodshed. They wanted more treasures therefore they started talking about the paths at the front of the hall.

They were under the impression that the path to the right would lead them to more treasures because that was the one Lin Zi Yan, Mo Ya, and Jin Yan choose. People started gathering around the entrance of the rightmost path led by Luo, Hong, and Xue.

The three unofficial leaders slowly walked towards the semi-transparent barrier that the three earlier easily went through.

Hong Xun made the first move. He channeled his Qi causing his skin to turn bronze. His short hair stood up akin to a porcupine with steel spikes. He then signaled for Luo Chao and Xue Yao to take a step back. They had an unspoken agreement that Hong Xun should go first as he was the strongest of the three at the eight-star Warrior level while the others were only at the seven-star level.

He stomped the ground and with his foot as the center a spherical, invisible forcefield spread outwards. Hong Xun threw his arm in the air and started drawing runes with his fingers. The runes then formed a golden Qi bell around his fist as he threw a punch towards the barrier mercilessly.

The presence of Hong Xun's punch drew everyone's attention, and even Ye Wei could feel the Qi disturbance from the edge of the hall. Everyone watched Hong Xun wondering what kind of treasure they would find behind the barrier.

His fist connected onto the barrier and with a loud rumble, the barrier started oscillating and eventually it forced Hong Xun's strike backwards.

Hong Xun's face was ashen as he was forced to take three steps back before he could stand steadily. Each of the steps left a shoe print on the solid ground.

He then coughed, and a line of blood appeared in the corner of his mouth. He stared at the barrier with shock and confusion, 'Am I that much weaker than those three? They entered effortlessly...' He was not the only one discouraged. Everyone who saw the failed attempt was depressed as well. They were afraid that if the strongest couldn't get through, none of them would be able to, and that all the treasure behind the barrier would never be recovered.

After a few deep breaths, Hong Xun's eyes turned to the path on the left, and he quietly walked towards it seeing that they didn't really have a chance to get through the rightmost barrier. Luo Chao and Xue Yao both

sighed and followed in his footsteps. 'I guess we will also have to settle for this path...'

'This guy was not able to get through with that much power behind his punch? I guess Zi Yan will be fine then as it literally took her less than a second to get in. How strong must she be to accomplish that?' Ye Wei thought as he walked out of his hiding place. He could see everyone were more or less calm now, so he felt safe enough to get closer. He wanted a closer look at the entrances so he could feel the disturbance of Qi from each direction.

The path on the left was a tunnel that was not blocked by anything. There was no barriers or doors, Lu, Hong, and Xue walked in with the rest of the survivors following them. 'I will just go in and take a look. I might be able to find some Welkin Leaves myself.' Not willing to go to the rightmost path alone nor wanted to draw any attention onto himself, Ye Wei followed the crowd onto the left path without attempting to break the barrier.

This tunnel looked similar to the ones that led everyone into the hall, but this tunnel was longer, and there were no barriers or anything on the sides; it was just an ordinary tunnel.

After a while, they reached the end of the tunnel. The people in front of the group could see a wide, open area covered with small sharp rocks. They seemed sharp enough to cut a person's feet if he or she were not careful.

In the middle of the rocks stood one thousand life-like stone effigies. They all had a humanoid shape. Most of them were brown stones and around forty of them were silver-white. Five effigies were larger than the rest, and each of them stood three meters tall and shone with a golden hue.

The effigies were all a bit different, most of them even had weapons in their hands. Some had swords, some had spears, and some of them had shields.

Nobody dared to step into the field, not even Luo, Hong, and Xue.

Everyone just stood at the end of the tunnel peeking.

Hong Xun grabbed a five-star Warrior who stood next to him and said: “Why don’t you go in and take a look?” As he threw the Warrior into the field out of the blue.

The Warrior was surprised, but he did not lose balance. He landed steadily on his feet clearly not pleased with how he was treated, so he started swearing at Hong Xun quietly. Pressured by Hong Xun and others, he had no choice but to investigate the field.

He unwillingly walked around the whole field carefully and nothing happened. Now relieved, he waved at the crowd and signaled that it was safe. People then started running into the field and inspecting the statues hoping to find hidden treasures somewhere.

‘I have a bad feeling about this...’ An image of a mountain flashed inside Ye Wei’s mind, and he started to panic while everyone else’s guards were still down. He felt like he was being watched by something, something alive, something bloodthirsty, something that wanted him dead. He became cautious and started restlessly looking around himself, but nothing was wrong. Everyone was just as they were before, some looking for treasures, some of them were just appreciating how lively the effigies looked.

Just as Ye Wei thought he was having an unreasonable panic attack, a barrier appeared at the tunnel’s exit, blocking the way out.

“Careful!” Ye Wei shouted to alert everyone and reached inside his bag. He held one of the Mystic scrolls tight. The crowd then turned to see the tunnel was sealed by a barrier that looked like the one Lin Zi Yan, Mo Ya, and Jin Yan opened earlier back in the hall.

“Who did this?”

“I told you not to touch anything!”

“What? How are we going to get out now?” The crowd started panicking when they heard a rumbling sound.

The brown effigies started moving and opening their stone eyes. Beams

of red light shot out of their eyes brightening the dim field. They started lifting their arms and waving them around. The effigies looked massive and clumsy, but they were unexpectedly fast, and their stone fists flew all over the place. The field suddenly filled with wind from the effigies' ferocious strikes.

“Dodge them!”

“Behind you!”

People with better reflex were doing just fine dodging these attacks, but for the ones who were frozen in place with fear and the ones who were injured in the brawl earlier, the red lights from the effigies' eyes and the heavy impact of stone fists became their last memory.

The seven-star Warriors had it easy as their primal feather wings helped them effortlessly maneuvering between the fists. But it was a struggle to survive for the rest of the crowd.

Fear spread on the field. The effigies did not feel nor did they care, they were programmed to kill and they would not stop.

Chapter 71: Impasse

Ye Wei stood on the edge of the field close to the now sealed exit, and the two effigies next to him raised their arms simultaneously throwing their fists towards him.

Luckily he wasn't unprepared. He was already in the air before the fists came close to him. He was able to dodge one of them but the second one connected in a flash despite his efforts.

"Ah!" Ye Wei's left hand was holding the scroll but he didn't feel the need to tear it. He clenched his right fist and hardened his muscles. His skin glowed with a green tint as he channeled his Qi.

Although Ye Wei was still a four-star Student, his strength and the amount of will-force and Qi he had was what you would find in a six-star Student. The cosmic energy, Myst-level Falling Star cultivation method, and all the pills were the reason he was becoming so exceptional.

'Let's try this!' He thought as he threw his fist towards the brown stone fist coming his way. His strength was no match to the effigy's which caused his whole arm to become numb from the impact, but he was able to use the recoil to push himself away and dodge the rest of the non-stop assault.

Ye Wei was drenched in sweat just from this brief physical exchange.

'It's too dangerous; if I was any slower I would be meat paste by now... I didn't even have time to tear the scroll!' He felt lucky that he got away, now that he was a safe distance from these two effigies. He knew how fast they were, and now that he had an idea of what to expect, he started to plan how to deal with them.

'They are not that strong. Their strength is comparable to a seven-star Student at most. Furthermore, their attacks are unbelievably fast but their movement in general is slow. It must be due to their weight.' Ye Wei analyzed the effigies' every move as he danced around dodging them.

Many others started fighting the effigies close to them once they

realized they looked scarier than they fought. Bolts of fire, ice and Qi weapons flew all over the field. Seeing how weak the effigies actually were, some of the Warriors who ran in fear started to become themselves again; they stopped fleeing and fought instead.

The effigies were easily stopped and knocked back by the Warriors' stances.

"They are not that powerful!"

"God, I was so scared!"

The crowd started to calm down as they gain control of the situation.

They were weak in general and the strength of the brown effigies varied from that of a three-star Student to a ten-star Student. What made their attacks lethal was the weight behind them.

As the crowd got used to the effigies' attack patterns, they became more relaxed, and saw the situation as an opportunity to train themselves. Everyone started attacking the brown stone beings instead of solely defending themselves a minute ago.

Not only did they started attacking the effigies, some of the Warriors actually succeeded in smashing them into pieces. Song Gui, driven by rage was one of the first Warriors to shatter an effigy with his bare hands.

"That is for my friend you killed!" Filled with adrenaline and satisfaction of avenging his fallen comrade, he spat on the pile of rubble and shouted angrily. But he wasn't done, he wanted to break as many of these damned effigies as possible to ease his pain.

Song Gui turned around to fight another effigy that was armed with a stone sword in each of its hands. As he set his eyes on the next target, a scarlet crystal broke out of the rubble pile and flew towards him like a speeding arrow.

Song Gui could hear a screeching sound and felt an approaching force from behind. The crystal flew too fast for him to react. "Ouch! What was that?!" Shocked by the pain in his spine, he screamed.

Just as the scarlet crystal landed on his spine, it shattered and released a thick cloud of bloodmist.

The bloodmist stuck onto Song Gui's back and kept growing until eventually it covered his whole body. The bloodmist was sticky and it quickly sunk into his body through the pores on his skin. People stopped attacking the effigies when they saw the engulfing mist appearing from the remains. Once again they didn't do more than defend themselves as they were afraid to break any more effigies until they found out what effect the mist had on Song Gui.

"Kill! Kill! Kill!" He mumbled.

When all of the bloodmist was absorbed into Song Gui's body, he completely lost his consciousness and was overcome by bloodlust. His eyes became bloodshot and the veins all over his body bulged. He looked more like a wild beast than a person.

With their primal feather wings, Hong Xun, Luo Chao, and Xue Yao launched themselves into the air and observed Song Gui's transformation from what they thought to be a safe distance.

"What do you two think?" Hong Xun's thick black eyebrows furrowed as he witnessed the gruesome transformation of the kind-hearted Warrior. "From what I can tell, the scarlet crystal that made him a monster might be the mythical Blood Devourer crystal..."

"What is that?" Xue Yao asked. Neither her nor Luo Chao could remember that name.

"Blood Devourers are a type of primal stone. The Qi stored within them is purer and thicker than normal primal stones, and its quenching property is superior to most of the pills available nowadays."

"But there is a drawback. The primal energy from these stones is too strong. It will make the user aggressive and the weak-minded will be consumed by the bloodlust... That's where the crystal's name came from.

The way Song Gui was screaming and twitching sent shivers down Xue Yao's spine. "Can we help him?"

“I don’t know if there is a way to help him, it’s all up to his will now if he can survive this. But that’s not the point I’m trying to make! Effigies and Blood Devourer crystals don’t they ring any bells? You guys never heard the stories when you were kids?”

It suddenly all came together for Luo Chao and Xue Yao, “Do you mean this labyrinth is related to the Glacial Emperor?!” Luo Chao widened his eyes and exclaimed.

“Are these effigies the ‘Immortal Puppets’?!” Xue Yao started to recall the details of the legend. She realized these were the stone guardians made by the Glacial Emperor to guard his tomb.

“That’s what the duo from Ning City are here for? To explore the Glacial Emperor’s tomb?”

“If the legends are true, the brown ones are not what we should be worried about.” Hong Xun continued, “The silver puppets are far more dangerous, but we should be able to handle them if we all work together. They should be as strong as five-star Warriors, but the gold ones... I don’t know how we can deal with them if they come.”

When they figured out what this labyrinth was, they temporarily put their differences aside so they could travel deeper into the labyrinth. The Glacial Emperor’s treasure was unmeasurable.

“Get away from him!”

“He’s on his own now, we can’t do anything about it!” Hong Xun warned the crowd from above as some of Song Gui’s friends were trying to get close and calm him down.

Not sure how they should deal with the stone puppets, everyone went back to dodging and defending themselves. It was not hard for anyone to dodge at the start, but as more and more of the brown puppets became active, weaker cultivators found themselves surrounded by more than one puppet as fatigue overtook them.

Ye Wei was now surrounded by three brown puppets. It was getting more and more dangerous and keeping a safe distance from them was

starting to become a struggle.

He heard a rumbling sound behind him and two more puppets behind him activated as he quickly ran through the gap between them. He now found himself standing in front of Song Gui. He was in dire straights now as he was blocked from all directions with nowhere to escape, and on top of that he was completely alone.

Chapter 72: Green veil

There was no way out. Every path of escape was blocked off by the stone puppets and Song Gui.

“I guess there is no other way...” Ye Wei was not pleased. Although he was given five scrolls in total, each of them were worth way more than he was comfortable spending. Using the scroll would not secure Welkin Leaves for his cousin, but desperate times call for desperate measures.

With attacks approaching from every direction, he didn't have a choice. Therefore, he tore the green scroll. There was no way he could last long if he used a defensive scroll. Being able to take a few more hits would not have put him in a better situation.

As the offensive Myst stance was released, the scroll that was worth more than one hundred thousand silver turned into just a useless scrap of silk.

“So this is what it feels like to be powerful?” Ye Wei felt refreshed to have complete control over so much energy. He was astonished and slowly started to understand why people would pay so much for these scrolls so much that it hurt his heart.

The runes written in demon blood came alive and floated in the air. They became a rune sequence and started to intertwine assembling into a ring of flame that eventually settled on the ground. The ring of fire brightened and encircled Ye Wei. Some of the people who were close to him could see the bright red light leaking from between the puppets.

Although not his own power, Ye Wei was in full control of the Singeing Ground stance, and it only took him a gaze to guide the flame towards the brown puppets. The flame created a mirage as it approached the puppets in a spinning motion as their fists closed in on Ye Wei. With five loud rumbling noises, the force shattered them into rubble, and the heat energy set them aflame.

However, the flame did not stop growing. It followed Ye Wei's point of vision to two hundred other brown puppets reducing them to rubble.

“How can this be? Who’s Myst stance is that?” The crowd was shocked by the ferocious attack and their eyes followed the trail of fire to Ye Wei’s location.

“Did he just use a medium-grade scroll?”

While the crowd was still surprised and stunned by the powerful stance, they notice a loud rumbling noise. As the flame died down the silver and golden puppets opened their eyes, and beams of red light shone brightly from their eyes.

“Oh no!”

With a speed far superior to the brown puppets, the silver and golden ones immediately rushed towards the cultivators like a pack of rampaging bulls. “I think the Qi disturbance from the kid’s Myst stance just woke them up...” Hong Xun’s face turn pale as the three strongest cultivators still had not worked out an answer for these stronger puppets.

The puppets’ fists fell from high up in the air, akin to a rain of meteors. Although the cultivators have been dodging and dancing through the brown puppets’ attacks, the silver and golden ones’ awakening was unexpected. They didn’t anticipate the stronger puppets’ swiftness to be so different than the brown ones.

In a panic, more than fifty Warriors lost their lives. Some to the crushing fists while others were stomped to death either by horrified comrades or the puppets.

Hong, Luo, and Xue knew that if the panic persisted then all of the cultivators would fall sooner or later, and that would be the end of their expedition. Although they didn’t have full knowledge about what the puppets could do, they couldn’t wait any longer.

“This is it. It’s now or never...” Hong Xun took the initiative and glided down. “Everybody listen! Be calm and stick together! Watch each other’s backs if you want to live!”

In the end, the cultivators on the field were Warriors with moderate experience, so they calmed down quickly and started defending

themselves methodically in small groups after Hong, Luo, and Xue stepped up and led the retaliation.

While the others were grouping up, Ye Wei was not so lucky. He was in the corner on his own with Song Gui as people were distracted by the stronger puppets and therefore forgot about him.

Too distracted by the new threat, nobody noticed that Ye Wei was shot by all the Blood Devourer crystals from the puppets he shattered. Ye Wei was soon surrounded by a layer of thick bloodmist. The vapor wrapped tighter and tighter and within seconds, he turned into a red cocoon.

The surge of energy from one crystal was enough to make Song Gui, a Warrior, lose his mind. Now Ye Wei was in the same situation, but instead of being struck by one crystal, Ye Wei was struck by two hundred and thirty-eight of them.

Inside the cocoon, Ye Wei's body started heating up. The pores on his skin expanded and made it easier for the concentrated bloodmist to sink in. It wasn't long before the aggressive and pure energy was deep under his skin, inside his muscles, organs, and bones.

The space in a four-star Student's dantian and Sentient was very limited, and even a condensed prime Warrior couldn't fully absorb the amount of energy currently rushing into Ye Wei's body. Ye Wei's body was enlarging, and if the cocoon didn't constrict it, it could have exploded already.

Rage and violent intent brought by the crystals' energy was taking over Ye Wei's consciousness. His memories of his father, mother, the Ye Patriarch, cousin Zhong, and Lin Zin Yan were flashing before him; then his cognition started to fade together with his conscience.

Although in this state, Ye Wei was aware of what he would become if he just gave up his sanity, so he bit lips in desperation. In the hope that doing so would stop himself from losing his mind; however, it was not very effective.

Just as he was about to be overcome by rage, the image of the Mystic Mountain appeared in his sentient. It then started to absorb the energy of the crystals. Not only did the Mystic Mountain absorb the energy, but it

also purified the surge of evil red energy into soothing yet intense primal energy.

The rage he felt disappeared, and Ye Wei's Sentient and dantian started to grow under the nourishment. Their sizes were now similar to cultivators at the Warrior rank. His cultivation would increase rapidly if he could get out of the cocoon and take the time to train. This near-death experience would actually compensate for how slow his Sentient usually absorbed primal energy from the surroundings.

Although the energy was purified, the sheer amount of it was still a problem. Ye Wei's body was not processing it quick enough, his skin was starting to crack, and his bones were grinding against each other.

In this critical moment, the iron talisman in Ye Wei's interspatial bag started vibrating. It started moving on of its own will and appeared outside of the bag. The talisman then broke through the cocoon and started spinning on top of Ye Wei's head. The eighty-one grooves on the talisman started shining as it started spinning so quickly that the rust on it was thrown off.

A black texture started to seep out of the grooves and expanded like a dark vortex. As it continually sped up, the vortex started to create a strong suction that extracted and then consumed the primal energy surging inside Ye Wei's body.

This caused the cocoon to quickly shrink and Ye Wei's body to return to its normal size. The talisman worked a miracle, it only consumed the excessive energy, and the remaining energy started repairing his cracked skin and fractured bones.

Ye Wei could not believe the iron talisman would be so useful even he did not know what it was for. After a few cracking sound were heard more and more green webs started appearing under his skin.

Ten green webs under Ye Wei's skin overlapped and formed a green screen which caused his body to glow mildly. He could tell his muscles were now as hard as solid wood and his bones were as strong as metal which signified a breakthrough.

Ye Wei was now a five-star Student, but his dantian and Sentient were stronger than what an ordinary six-star Student possessed, and his body did not stop storing the energy.

The green screen under his skin grew thicker as the purified energy circulated throughout his body. The rest of the purified energy saturated his meridian widening them. After absorbing even more of the purified energy, he became a six-star Student!

Chapter 73: Golden Puppets

For any Students, five-star and seven-star breakthroughs are the most challenging. Whereas the breakthrough to the six-star level is much simpler. When one's Qi reserve reaches a certain level their meridians will expand and widen. This is the definition of a six-star Student.

Now though neither of those are a big problem for Ye Wei. He could not imagine that the iron talisman would help his cultivation, especially not this significantly.

Ye Wei now possessed the body strength of a seven-star Student, and he could probably take on any seven-star Student in a fight as they usually don't know any powerful stances.

'Just one more breakthrough then I can try learning mystic stances!' Ye Wei was ecstatic. Any stance, even just a low-level Spirit stance is more powerful than an ordinary physical attack. As the saying goes, 'You're not a cultivator until you've mastered your first mystic stance.'

After absorbing the rush of energy that was inside Ye Wei's body, the iron talisman stop spinning. It was now just floated quietly in front of him and twelve out of the eighty-one grooves on it lit up with a silver glow.

"Stop its attack!"

"If we don't work together we will all die!"

As the energy within Ye Wei stabilized, his head stopped humming. He could hear the shouting and rumbling through the thick red cocoon. Eager to try out his strength, he threw a punch and broke the cocoon open effortlessly.

He walked out gracefully and retrieved the talisman floating in front of him. He could feel that the talisman was filled with primal energy. Realizing it saved his life by neutralizing the Blood Devourer crystals' energy and helped him breakthrough, he started to wonder and narrowed his eyes. 'What are you? I am pretty sure you're not a Mystic Arm...'

Ye Wei then looked up to evaluate the situation. All he could see was brown rubble on the ground and fallen fighters. There were only about five hundred people left standing from the thousand who entered.

There were a few hundred puppets that were shattered at this point, and half of them were destroyed by Hong Xun, Lu Chao, and Xue Yao.

With broken puppets came rage crazed fighters. The crowd didn't show any mercy to them after seeing Song Gui lose his mind and realizing they were not able to save the fighters who were affected by the crystals. In the end it was their lives at stake so they didn't try to help. With the sacrifice of the fallen, all the silver puppets were finally shattered.

'These golden puppets are on a different level!' As Ye Wei was shaking the flakes of the bloodmist cocoon off his clothes, Lu, Hong, and Xue lead everyone else to attack the golden puppets. Despise the organised attack the puppets showed no sign of slowing down, their attacks were as strong as when they were just activated.

From what Hong Xun could see four of the golden puppets were as strong as a seven-star Warrior while the biggest and strongest one had the strength of an eight-star Warrior. Even Hong Xun, strong as he was, couldn't deal with it alone. Lu, Xue and him were handling the biggest one while they commanded the rest what they could.

The survivors organised themselves into four groups of around one hundred by Hong Xun's order. Each group kept one golden puppet under control. They couldn't really harm the puppets, but handling them with a big group was the only way to survive. They were just waiting for the three temporary leaders to finish the strongest puppet so they could combine their forces and deal with the rest.

"Let's not play the long game; we can't just tire it out. The crystals inside them can keep them running for days. We have to give it our all and finish them. Our bodies will never outlast theirs." Hong Xun said as he strengthened his body with the Golden Bell stance. His body was covered by a layer of golden Qi and his empowered fist knocked the strongest puppet off balance.

“Nice!” Lu Chao and Xue Yao could also feel that the prolonged fight has taken its toll on their bodies. They all came to the same conclusion, that they would not have any will-force or Qi left if the fight lasted much longer.

Lu Chao grunted and quickly drew a rune sequence. It wrapped around his legs forming his strongest stance, Tempest Kick. Behind the bright green light of the runes, a tornado was brewing. Then he unleashed his spinning kick mercilessly towards the golden puppet.

Meanwhile Xue Yao was also not holding back. She finished drawing the last rune of her sequence and activated the Lotus Sword Dance. A green spectral lotus appeared and the six petals detached themselves from the flower transforming into six swords that flew towards the puppet at different angles.

“Golden Drill!” Hong Xun shouted then drew some runes around his body. The runes started spinning around him and the bell shaped Qi armor around him also started rotating and vibrating. With a humming sound the golden bell tore through air and flew directly towards their common enemy.

Although Hong Xun was the last person to attack, he was the strongest among the three. His stance was not only the most powerful, it was also the quickest therefore the Golden Drill was the first stance to hit the puppet.

The Golden Drill shattered upon connecting with the puppet. The sharp debris of the drill carried on attacking the puppet chipping off little golden pieces of stone. Hundred of cracks and cuts were forming on the puppet but it felt no pain, nor was it worn down any. It continued waving its fists around and charging towards Hong Xun.

Seeing that Hong Xun’s stance left cracks on the puppet, Lu and Xue redirected their stances toward the weaker inch deep cracks on the puppet’s surface.

The green tornado and the six spectral swords landed on the puppet’s left shoulder and right arm respectively. While the impact of Lu Chao’s

kick not only expanded the cracks rapidly, but with the help of Xue Yao's swords they successfully stopped the puppet's attacks and also broke its arms off.

Hong Xun could not relax just yet, "Don't let your guards down!" Although it's armless, the puppet was still charging towards him and approaching with a spinning kick.

Now that the puppet's attacks slowed down Hong, Lu, and Xue took the chance to take a deep breath and regained a bit of energy. Energy they put towards their final strike.

"Hold on guys! The strongest puppet is about to go down, we just have to keep these weaker ones under control for a bit longer!" Encouraged by the sight of the armless puppet, the morale surged.

Ye Wei couldn't really contribute at this point. He was just observing from the side and thinking about Ye Zhong. 'Compared to Green Moon City these youngsters from Frozen Sun City are very strong. I think cousin Zhong is talented enough, with my help he should be able to catch up with Hong Xun maybe even Luo Wu Xue!'

'I need to go deeper into this labyrinth to find some Welkin Leaves! But we won't be able to search for the path ahead until we neutralize these statues!' With that in mind, he jumped into one of the groups and tried to make himself useful. He was kind of glad that everything seemed to be under control, or else he might have to use yet another scroll to help defeat these puppets.

After a brief moment of rest, Lu, Xue, and Hong used their best stances again and this time they targeted the puppet's legs, which turned into rubble as the stances connected. The trio was exhausted, but their effort paid off. The puppet was now no longer a threat.

Having used high-level Spirit stance multiple times in such quick succession, Lu Chao and Xue Yao pretty much drained their will-force and Qi. Their faces were pale and their breathing was a bit heavy.

It was not much better for Hong Xun, although he was an eight-star Warrior, he was mentally and physically worn out as he had to pay

attention to the other four puppets and tell the groups of cultivators how to deal with the stone fists. He did this all while leading Lu and Xue to defeat the strongest puppet.

“Guys! Just hold on for a couple more minutes!” Hong Xun shouted as he took a pill out of his bag. He used the pill then sat down to regain some Qi and body strength.

Lu Chao and Xue Yao too took their time to recuperate hoping there would not be more casualties before they could eradicate the rest of the puppets.

Chapter 74: Last Resort

“Fight safe! We won’t get any help before they’ve recovered!” One of the stronger Warriors stepped up and tried to motivated the exhausted groups, but his effort was pretty redundant as everyone could almost taste victory.

As for Ye Wei, his hand was never further than an inch away from his interspatial bag. If anything happened, the scrolls would be the thing he would rely on while the three who are capable of neutralizing the puppets were still recovering from exhaustion.

Time passed slowly while the groups struggled to defend themselves against the puppets. But before long, Hong Xun opened his eye and stood up with an unstoppable momentum, his face was no longer pale. Lu Chao and Xue Yao also stood up shortly after Hong Xun did.

Interpreting the trio’s recovery as the end of the battle, the groups were starting to feel relieved.

Ye Wei, took his hand away from his interspatial bag as Hong Xun approached. ‘If they can beat the fastest, strongest, and biggest one of them the rest should not be a problem!’

However just as Lu Chao was channeling his Qi, all of the golden puppets, including the limbless one on the ground opened their mouths and started roaring.

All five puppets widened their eyes and casted beams of red light into the air. They met in the air and the runes climbed up the small pillars of red light towards the center of the field. The runes on their bodies started moving and glowing red forming the frame of an irregular five sided pyramid.

The thousands of runes filling the space akin swarms of butterflies. Suddenly, a loud rumbling sound echoed throughout the space as the runes linked together. An intense wave of energy shortly followed leaving the crowd in shock.

Their relaxed faces turned ashen as they shivered, even Hong, Lu, and Xue were afraid, 'This is definitely not good...' They thought. The pressure they felt exceeded what they experienced when Jin Yan and Mo Ya channeled their Myst stances to break the gigantic rune barrier.

'What is going on here?' Ye Wei could feel the energy from each of the puppets merging with one another. There was a synergistic reaction between the five sets of runes. 'Is there a way to stop this? I don't think this will end well for anyone if the energy keeps growing...'

As the crowd were shaking in fear, the golden puppets suddenly shattered and from the rubble five large Blood Devourer crystals rose.

They quickly flew up, and each of them soaked up the runes on a red rune pillar to form five rune clusters. Then the ground started shaking and nobody could stand straight. People either fell or were on their hands and knees. As the earthquake intensified, the rubble on the field started rattling and levitating.

The field was spacious, and there were no less than a hundred thousand pieces of sharp rubble on the field. This moment all of them flew into the air. It looked like a violent sandstorm from a distance. The rubble was drawn towards the rune clusters. Two of them started taking the shape of arms and two others formed legs, while the last cluster was forming a head shape.

After the limbs and head took shape, the rubble starting filling the space between the stone limbs. By the time this thirty meters tall stone puppet came together everyone were shaking; they were overwhelmed by fear.

Not only did the larger structure appeared sturdier than its previous smaller incarnations, it was clear to everyone that none of the cultivators present possesses power to defeat this stone giant and their fear turned into despair.

Jin Yan and Mo Ya were peak level ten-star Warriors which means they are about ten times stronger than a ten-star who just broke through and the stone giant was the former kind of existence.

“Someone here has to have a medium-grade scroll right!?” Inspiration struck Hong Xun as he remembered a boy used a Mystic Scroll to destroyed more than two hundred puppets in less than ten seconds. “Where is what’s his face? Did he survive? Does he have any more scrolls!?” Hong Xun was panicked. He shouted as he ran through the crowd looking for Ye Wei.

“Guys find that kid!” Hong Xun was not the only person who saw Ye Wei dealing with the puppets, and it wasn’t long until one of them spotted Ye Wei.

“Here he is!” One of the Warriors signaled the others when he identified Ye Wei, and everyone started running towards where he was.

“Let’s go to him!”

“Guys he’s there!”

Shouting continued as fear was in the air and the levitating stone giant slowly descended. With a loud rumble it landed and, although the landing was gentle, the stone giant’s feet left two deep potholes due to its weight. Its red beams of light shone from its eyes were now pointed in the cultivators’ direction.

“Run!”

After a deafening roar, the stone giant started chasing after the crowd. Each step it took shook the ground, and the red projection on the crowds’ back intensified as the stone giant got closer.

It’s not very often one sees hundreds of cultivators running for their lives. Although Ye Wei was the only person who could see this scene from the side, he was not amused by it, but rather worried about letting everyone down.

‘Please tell us you have another scroll!’ Was everyone’s thought at that moment but none of them had the time to ask Ye Wei if he had another one as they were too busy running for their lives.

There was no other way. No one present could fight this stone giant, Ye Wei was now their last hope; their last resort.

Lots of the people who were at the field including Hong, Lu, and Xue actually considered escaping when Jin Yan and Mo Ya showed up because of the threat they felt, but this stone puppet startled them on a completely different level. If worse came to worst, there would be no chance to negotiate or beg for mercy and there was nowhere left to run.

The stone giant showed no signs of stopping. It was striking its chest creating a drumming sound while chasing the crowd. While everyone was running away from it, Ye Wei had his head down and slowly walked towards what the others feared.

‘I can’t promise anything... But I guess this is our only chance.’ Ye Wei’s shaking hand tightly grasped onto one of the offensive Mystic Scrolls.

The closer the stone giant got, the harder it was for him to breathe. While the giant’s pace remained the same, Ye Wei’s heart was beating faster and faster.

Thirty meters...

Twenty meters...

Ten meters...

Ye Wei meant to tear the scroll way sooner but it took time for him to gather his strength as he was in shock. He finally managed to tear it when the giant was only one step away from crushing him.

The moment the scroll was torn, the demon blood runes flew out and the sequence rapidly transformed into a ten meter long hammer. A weapon that belonged to an old god.

Although the gigantic phantom hammer gave off an intense Qi disturbance, due to the runic link, Ye Wei could move it around fluidly as if it was a weightless extension of his arm.

Without a moment’s hesitation, Ye Wei loosened his shoulders and took a heavy step forward. After quickly establishing a steady point of balance he grunted then swung the phantom hammer with lightning-like speed towards the approaching stone giant.

“He really has one! It’s a Myst stance!” Hong Xun exclaimed. ‘It was apparent that this kid was just a Student so what kind of powerful family would invest so much resources in a weakling like him? I bet even Jin Yan had to earn his scrolls by contributing to his family, and he had one of the most prestigious last names in Ning City!’

At first the crowd was surprised and somewhat jealous of how Ye Wei was carrying more than two hundred thousand worth of scrolls with him. But after the initial amusement, they were just rooting for him. They were hoping that this ‘rich kid’ could help them avoid their impending doom.

Chapter 75: Functions

Medium-grade mystic scrolls are anything but common, and it was the stances within that made them known as a symbol of power. This reputation was the reason why everyone was almost smiling when they saw the Myst stance summoned from Ye Wei's scroll. They were more than certain that the phantom hammer would turn the stone giant back into rubble.

However, Hong, Lu, and Xue were a bit more realistic. There was an optimistic shine in their eyes but also a frown. All three of them knew how powerful the puppet was, and an incomplete Myst stance might not be enough to take down the combined power of six large Blood Devourer crystals.

The three temporary leaders were doubtful, but they kept their cool and were ready to strike the giant together with Ye Wei. Not that they were sure their joined attack would be sufficient, but they would have to try because if they didn't then nobody would get out of this field alive.

Ye Wei was under immense pressure as he was the focus of everyone's eyes, but he didn't let the stress get to him. He was in his own world and determined to give it his all.

It was hard to miss such a large target, and a deafening bang sounded when the hammer landed right on the puppet's shoulder. The collision created a violent spray of sparks and a rippling pressure wave that shook the ground.

The giant was forced to take a step back, and that was the moment when Ye Wei seized the opportunity to aim the hammer at its head.

Contrary to its clumsy appearance, the giant's reflexes were actually phenomenal. It quickly crossed its arms over its head to block Ye Wei's strike.

Seeing that the giant was defending itself efficiently against the Myst stance, the crowd started to show worrying expressions as they watched the mighty hammer that was held in the air.

A cracking sound caught the attention of the crowd. It was not from the point of impact but the sound of the ground breaking underneath the giant as his feet sank about a meter into the surface.

Ye Wei's face was completely red. He grunted and put all his strength behind the third strike that landed on the giant's head this time. Its legs completely sunk in the ground to its knees.

After immobilizing the giant, Ye Wei could feel that the phantom hammer was going to disappear soon as its energy was quickly running out. Thus, he took one last chance to hammer the puppet.

This time, the hammer landed heavily on the puppet's shoulder. After the final hammer strike, the giant's waist was submerged below solid ground. Its right shoulder and arm were cracked and chipped from the repeated strikes. As the red light in the giant's eyes was dimming the phantom hammer started to fade.

"Yes!"

"He did it!"

The crowd cheered as the stone giant powered down. Hong, Lu, and Xue were relieved by the result, and their lips curled into relaxing smiles.

Ye Wei too was relaxed, and there was a childish smile on his face. Although he had to use two very valuable medium-grade scrolls, he was satisfied that he managed to save hundreds of lives. He was also happy that he would be able to search for a path that led deeper into the labyrinth.

Welcomed by friendly smiles, Ye Wei turned and walked towards the others, but as he took the fifth step, a sharp cracking noise came from behind him. "What?" The unexpected sound sent a shiver down his spine, and he immediately turned around to check on the stone giant.

The crisp cracking sound echoed in the field and was heard by everyone. Suddenly everything went silent as everyone quickly looked towards the source of the sound, it caused their smiles to disappear.

"How... How come..." Hong, Lu, and Xue emotionlessly stared at the

stone giant and their faces became ashened.

The giant started moving again as its fists fiercely pounded the ground cracking and breaking the surface.

With every punch, the cracks spread and the ground around the giant turned into loose rubble in no time. The giant then roared and slammed his palms to the ground one last time, launching its gigantic body into the air.

The red light in its eye relit and this time, they looked like two massive fireballs. The giant's killing intent and presence had intensified considerably.

"But that was a medium-grade mystic scroll! How else can we stop it if a Myst stance failed the job?"

"How can this be?!"

"Does anyone here have other ways to deal with this stone giant?!"

"No! No! I don't want to die!"

The stone giant landed on the ground, and no hopeful faces could be found on the field. Some were crying and while others were screaming as it approached.

"I can't just die here!" Ye Wei bite his lips in a panic. 'That was all I had, what else can I do?'

Just as Ye Wei was coming to the conclusion that there was nothing at all he could do, the silhouette of his cousin appeared in his mind. 'It's true I don't have answers at this moment, but cousin Zhong fought till he dropped to save my life and I shall do the same!' Ye Wei's fighting spirit was relit, and his tired eyes were brightened.

Ye Wei took out his interspatial bag and began searching.

There were Qi stones, herbs, pills, and some rare metals in the bag but all of the items he found in the stone houses with Lin Zi Yan were useless.

The most valuable things in his bag would be the Sliver Moon pills and

then the scrolls he was given. Taking the pills won't help in such an urgent situation. There were one offensive and two defensive scrolls remaining, but they had proven to be insufficient...

"No, not this!"

Ye Wei's bloodshot eyes looked hysterical as the stone giant was closing in but after going through his whole interspatial bag, he could not find anything that would help him.

The giant's fist was in front of him now, and he had no time, 'Screw it!' Ye Wei grit his teeth, he was ready to take out all three remaining scrolls "Ouch, that burns!" Just as he pulled the scrolls out, his hand came in contact with something hot.

"It's the iron talisman?!" Ye Wei took the talisman out together with the scrolls. The last time he laid his hands on the talisman it was as cold as ice, but now it left a mild burn mark on his skin. He was confused, but there was no time for him to think about it.

"Watch out!" As Ye Wei was distracted by the burn, the stone fist was only a meter away from him. Everyone gasped as it did not look like he had enough time to dodge.

A second ago he was wondering why the talisman was so hot and the next second all he knew was that an enormous stone fist was in front of him.

At this critical time, he made a split decision to tear the offensive scroll. Hundreds of glittering runes appeared, and the temperature around him dropped. The runes then turned into small icicles, and the icicles merged together forming a sword. It was the low-level Myst stance, Black Icicle Sword.

As Ye Wei was ready to strike the giant with the icicle sword, the talisman in his hand heated up and started vibrating causing it to slip out of his hand. Immediately the talisman flew above the stone giant and created a black vortex.

Having absorbed the energy of over two hundred puppets, twelve of the

eighty-one grooves were lit up. Now more and more of those grooves were lighting up as it absorbed energy from the stone giant.

‘The talisman is... absorbing the giant’s power?’

‘It’s draining the giant!’

Ye Wei’s eyes widened, he could hardly believe how slow the giant’s punch had suddenly become due to the talisman. It took no effort for him to jump to the side and dodge the attack.

Observing the talisman’s mysterious abilities, Ye Wei was just as confused as he was happy to stop these puppets.

Chapter 76: Blood Cocoon

Judging from the stone giant's original power, even if Ye Wei were to tear another medium-grade scroll and activate the Myst stance within, it would not really be effective, but now he saw a chance with the iron talisman's aid.

"Black Ice Sword, cut!"

It was a golden opportunity, and Ye Wei naturally took the chance. He screamed and mercilessly drove the ancient ice-cold sword into the puppet's neck.

Although Ye Wei was the owner of the iron talisman, he didn't really know why or how it could crush the puppet, but everyone who was looking from the behind thought he did. They assumed the talisman was a powerful item given to him by his mysterious family.

While Ye Wei was driving the Black Ice Sword toward the puppet's neck, everyone watched the highly anticipated strike; the hundreds of Warriors and also Ye Wei could not take their eyes off the sword.

How this sword struck would determine everyone's destiny.

"Booom!"

Under the watchful eyes, the chillingly sharp ancient blade cut across the stone giant's neck, its head rolled off from its neck immediately.

"Black Ice Sword, cut it! Cut!" Ye Wei had no other thought in his head; he just wanted to get in as many strikes as he could before the sword disappeared. He used every last bit of strength in his body to repeatedly strike the giant.

The puppet was almost invulnerable, but under the iron talisman's suppression, it was no different than ordinary stone!

'How could ordinary stone withstand a Myst stance?'

The sword kept striking down.

Within the frame of a few breathes, Ye Wei took full advantage of the

situation and used the Black Ice Sword to attack the puppet multiple times. When the sword finally disappeared, the stone giant was completely demolished; he was turned into countless pieces of gravel.

Just as the monster crumbled, the five Blood Devourer crystals that powered the giant no longer had a host, and they shot towards Ye Wei.

These five crystals were superior to the two hundred and thirty-eight Blood Devourer crystals from before; the Qi and the violent intent were also stronger!

“No!” Ye Wei’s face changed massively. Subconsciously he wanted to dodge the crystals, but their speed was just too fast, in the blink of an eye they had already landed on Ye Wei’s body.

Five crystals violently exploded when they touched Ye Wei’s skin and dispersed into a screen of thick blood mist. Just as it was about to wrap around Ye Wei, the iron talisman flew three inches above Ye Wei’s head. At this moment, the dense blood mist had already become a three meters tall human shaped blood cocoon.

Everything happened in mere seconds, so quick that nobody could even react.

“What’s going on?”

“We have to save him!”

A couple of Warriors realized what happened and hurried to Ye Wei’s side. They anxiously looked at the three meters tall human shaped cocoon. Ye Wei has saved their lives, and to beat this stone puppet he used a total of three medium-grade mystic scrolls. This favor was as big as Mt. Tai.

Although they were here at Bloodmist Valley for treasures, Ye Wei had saved them and a lot of people were grateful! That’s why, even when the passage that led deeper into the labyrinth had appeared on the ground where the golden puppets were located after the stone giant has shattered, they were still guarding the giant human shaped blood cocoon with faces full of concern.

Hong Xun frowned while looking at the blood cocoon. Aware of how dangerous the Blood Devourer crystals were, he scanned the crowd and asked in a calm tone, "Is there a solution?"

Even one Blood Devourer crystal contained enough energy and rage to strip a Warrior's conscience and drive the victim insane, and now Ye Wei had the energy of five large, superior-grade Blood Devourer crystal consuming him, a mere Student.

Students were not as strong willed as Warriors. As warriors already had the experience of defeating their inner demons at least once and because of this their minds were much stronger.

For cultivators, breaking through star levels meant just a minor breakthroughs, and to achieve those, one only needs to strengthen their Sentient and body, which is relatively easy.

But if one wants to advance to the next rank, from Student to Warrior, for example, one must experience a major breakthrough. During which the cultivator will have to face their inner demons. From Student to Warrior, Warrior to condensed prime Warrior, condensed prime Warrior to returned prime Warrior, during all these stages a cultivator will have to face and conquer his personal fears; otherwise, he will remain a ten-star Student or ten-star Warrior forever. Someone never strong enough to deal with their inner demons.

"He is just a Student, so his will is weaker than Warriors. These Blood Devourer crystals are stronger than the ones that powered the weaker puppets... I'm afraid..."

"So what should we do? Are you saying that we should just watch?" Zhou Hou was so anxious that his forehead was covered in sweat.

When he saw that Ye Wei was with Lin Zi Yan, he already had the idea that they had powerful people behind them, but he would have never guessed that they would have given him as many as three medium-grade scrolls.

"There is no way we can save him!"

Lu Chao gazed upon the blood cocoon that contained Ye Wei then looked at the passage that led deeper into the labyrinth, and a sense of greed flashed through his eyes. But he was also worried. The stone creatures here were very strong and deeper in the labyrinth there was bound to be something even more dangerous lurking. If he were alone, he wouldn't dare enter.

"Now... Now what? Do we just wait?" Lu Chao asked with fake concern. He said trying to convince everyone that he cared about Ye Wei.

"Keep waiting?" There were a lot of people in the crowd who started to look down with uncertainty in their eyes. They had lived through many dangerous moments, and had many near death experiences, and as such they weren't sure if it was worth their time when they could be exploring the labyrinth instead.

"I, Hong Xue, owe him my life! No matter the outcome, I have to know if he lives or dies!" Hong Xun straightened his face and stared at Lu Chao.

"Me too!"

"And me!"

In the end, there were a lot of people who truly appreciated Ye Wei's effort and were genuinely concerned about his well-being.

"Count me in too!" Zhou Hou was an opportunist, but an honorable man. His life was saved by Ye Wei, and if he were to leave Ye Wei behind for his own personal gain he would be no different to an animal that has no concept of honor. No matter what, he had to know Ye Wei's fate.

Among these Warriors, many of them knew how to be respectful and honorable; if they were not, their comrades would abandon them without hesitation.

However, some of them, like Lu Chao, wanted to go deeper into the labyrinth, but as nobody was going to take the lead they were too scared to make a move.

Everyone started to sit down and cultivate. Time passed slowly as they waited. After five hours had passed uneventfully, Lu Chao and some of

the others started getting restless and annoyed. They could not repress their greed.

“It was not easy getting this far, do we really need to waste our time and wait for one person?” Lu Chao rose up and asked.

“That youngster saved my life, and I will remember his kindness for the rest of my life, but we can’t just sit here and wait. I, Lu Chao, will share half of the treasures I find here in this labyrinth with this boy in the cocoon. This I swear!” Lu Chao sounded convincing. ‘If he lives.’ He finished in his head.

“We have been through many challenges that could have easily cost us our lives to get to where we are now. My family is currently going through a crisis, and I have to get more treasure from this trip to help them through this tough time!” Lu Chao said as he excused himself and headed towards the passage.

“Is it really necessary to wait and see if the boy lives or dies?”

Lu Chao scornfully looked at the blood cocoon. In his eyes, there was no way this Student could overcome the rage intent of five superior-grade Blood Devourer crystals and therefore no point in waiting.

Other Warriors eventually stood up as well, “My mother is very ill! I am an only child, and if I don’t obtain any treasures and sell them to pay for my mother’s treatment, then I won’t be able to face my ancestors!”

“My father is ill!”

“My fiancée is waiting for me!”

“My child...”

Followed by Lu Chao’s fake speech, people who cared more about the treasures hidden ahead eventually stood up one by one and gave all sorts of excuses to ease their conscience.

“If you all don’t want to stay, then leave! Nobody is stopping you! Save your stupid excuses for people who care!” Hong Xun said while opening his eyes and staring at Lu Chao and the cowards behind him.

The Warriors who were patiently waiting also opened their eyes and spitefully stared at the ungrateful.

“Ha, ha! Lu Chao, today I finally get to see your true colors!” Xue Yao laughed sarcastically, “To have you known as one of the four strongest youngsters of Frozen Sun City is a disgrace.”

“Pfft! I don’t care what you lot think of me. I have no regrets, and I am definitely not ungrateful!” Lu Chao felt shameful as his greed was exposed; he could feel the spiteful stares as he walked away.

Led by Lu Chao half of the Warriors left to explore the depths of the labyrinth.

“What is happening inside the cocoon...” Hong Xun, Xue Yao, and the cultivators who stayed couldn’t take their eyes off it; they continued to wait patiently. How Ye Wei made it out of the last cocoon gave them hope that he would get out of this one safely too.

Chapter 77: Seven-Star

Inside the blood cocoon, the iron talisman was flying around Ye Wei's body whilst giving off a red glow. This time, Ye Wei was very much conscious despite the rage of the souls sacrificed to make the crystals that were rushing through his body, as the Mystic Mountain was suppressing the aggressive energy of the crystals inside Ye Wei's Sentient. The rage intent and aggressive energy were once again purified, nourishing and strengthening Ye Wei's Sentient instead of harming it.

Ye Wei opened his eyes thinking, 'There is good and evil within everyone. It's so hard to judge if a person really cares about you unless you see how they deal with a situation like this...' The people outside could not see Ye Wei, but Ye Wei could hear their conversations clearly.

The fact that some of the Warriors left while the others willingly stayed showed Ye Wei what being honorable truly meant.

'My Sentient is almost as strong as a Warrior's now, and now that I have enough pills I think I can try to breakthrough to seven-star level!'

'However this is not the time. My dantian has not fully expanded yet! I should make it as large as I can before I attempt to breakthrough.' Ye Wei clenched his fist as he thought this. Although the Ye family is not considered big, they did teach their kids common sense. Ye Wei was taught a great deal about training since a young age.

'The seven-star Student breakthrough is the most important for a Student; I have to do it properly. Rushing it will do me more harm than good.' Ye Wei's radiant eyes shone brightly.

'The body will evolve when one becomes a five-star Student, and the green screen of Qi will help improve one's speed, strength, and defense multiple times compared to a four-star Student! And when I become a seven-star Student, my dantian will evolve!'

'Base on the dantian size during the breakthrough, seven-star Student's dantian can potentially hold many times the Qi as a six-star Student can, that's why six-star Students should establish a good foundation and

strengthen their dantian as hard as possible!’

‘While breaking through to the six-star level, my dantian was widened, when I become a seven-star Student its space will multiply. I need to take advantage of my time now as the more I expand it, the greater the effects will be when I breakthrough.’

‘A frightening amount of Qi is needed to expand it, and the better the pills are the larger my dantian will get. It seems that the Qi inside each superior-grade Blood Devourer crystal is purer and stronger than the Qi within a Silver Moon pill, and it’s only a tiny bit weaker than cosmic energy. Although the talisman absorbed the majority of the Qi from the Blood Devourer crystals, the remaining energy should be sufficient for my needs!’

‘I’ve never heard of these strange red crystals. I don’t think they are something I can buy anywhere. If they were for sale, I imagine they would cost far more than a Silver Moon pill. The feeling I get after refining these crystals is as if I had taken quite a few high-quality pills.’

Ye Wei thought all this as he controlled the energy from the Blood Devourer crystals. He diverted all of it from around his body into his dantian to expand it as much as possible.

The iron talisman had now returned to its original position, three inches above Ye Wei’s head, after flying around his body absorbing most of the energy. While Ye Wei was focused on cultivating, the talisman had been replenishing its energy. Now eighty out of the eighty-one grooves on the talisman were shining silver, and the last groove was half filled.

The people who sat around the blood cocoon did not know that Ye Wei was currently cultivating, and five more hours passed without anyone noticing anything odd about the cocoon. After hours of channeling the energy into his dantian, Ye Wei vigorously opened his eyes.

‘It’s at its limit!’ Ye Wei’s face showed joy and his eyes were shining. After cultivating for so long, he finally fully expanded his dantian as much as was physically possible.

Ye Wei also knew that once he became a seven-star Student, his will-

force would evolve as well. His Sentient should then be as large as a Warrior's, and his dantian would be able to store as much as a nine-star Student could!

When he successfully breaks through and reaches the seven-star level, his body strength wouldn't be necessary for combat. He would be as strong as a nine-star Student due to his Sentient and dantian! His body strength would be the only thing lacking.

Strength is strength but against mystic stances it can only do so much!

'Now is the time to breakthrough!' Ye Wei thought excitedly in his heart. He was looking forward to this for a long time now. Once he becomes a seven-star Student, he can verify if he is able to use mystic stances; even if he can't use them he could still attempt to create and refine stances!

For now, Ye Wei's Sentient was still red, but so what? If he could use mystic stances, he can easily refine stances with his phenomenal Soul Sensibility. With all the cosmic energy he would acquire he could then easily upgrade his Sentient quickly.

After Ye Wei slowly exhaled and calmed down from his excitement, struggled to move his arm inside the tight cocoon but he managed to take a Silver Moon pill out of his bag and swallowed it, thus started attempting a breakthrough.

The Silver Moon pill melted as it entered Ye Wei's mouth and the dense Qi within the pill was released immediately. It rushed into his system, and he was overwhelmed by a refreshing feeling as if he had dived into a cool river on a midsummer's day. His muscles were shaking, and his bones emitted a cracking sound. His organs were vibrating and it felt like every cell of his body was cheering and celebrating. Ye Wei narrowed his eyes and let himself dwell in this comfortable feeling.

'These Silver Moon pills are definitely better and more valuable than Fiery Sun Quenchers, and their effects are astounding. The Qi within them is so clean, and there are no impurity in the energy at all!' Feeling the intense, refreshing primal energy in his body, Ye Wei's lips curled

upward forming an excited smile.

‘The transformation has begun!’ Ye Wei thought as he took a deep breath and could feel the changes in his body. He closed his eyes and held his breath as he started to focus on breaking through.

Ye Wei’s cultivation was at the limit of a six-star Student’s. His Sentient and his body strength were strong enough now, and with the help of the Silver Moon pills breaking through was not a difficult task at all.

Bang! Boom! Boom!

As the Silver Moon pill’s effect spread throughout Ye Wei’s body, his strength slowly started to improve. The green energy layer under his skin thickened, and his Sentient too was gradually expanding however his dantian transformed at an even faster speed.

The quiet dantian was filled with dense primal energy, and it was vibrating at a mysterious frequency. With this vibration, Ye Wei’s dantian was expanding at a pace.

In a matter of moment, Ye Wei’s dantian was twice as big as it was before he had been trapped in the cocoon.

To expand one’s dantian takes an alarming amount of primal energy, and in a matter of seconds, Ye Wei had swallowed three whole Silver Moon pills.

Ye Wei’s Sentient was red, so it absorbs Qi at a very slow rate. If it wasn’t supported by pills or external energy, just from normal training Ye Wei would not be able to gather enough Qi without two to three years’ time.

Luckily Ye Wei had enough pills on him. A total of one hundred and eighty-nine Silver Moon pills, and that was way more than enough for his seven-star breakthrough.

Feeling the pills’ effect fading, Ye Wei took one Silver Moon pill after another as if they were candy.

Time passed slowly while Ye Wei took pill after pill. Under this

enormous influx of Qi, Ye Wei's dantian kept expanding.

Two times, three times, four times, five times!

When Ye Wei's dantian has enlarged five times its original size, his expansion speed started to slow down. Four more hours passed until his dantian was finally seven times as big as its original size, and when his growth stopped he was a seven-star Student!

Seven times!

Ye Wei's dantian expanded seven times its original size. Now his dantian was multiple times larger than an ordinary seven-star Student's it is even comparable to a nine-star Student's dantian.

Before attempting his breakthrough, Ye Wei used the energy from the crystals to expand his dantian to its maximum size. After using them, he had a good foundation to build on which is what let his dantian grow so much more than an ordinary six-star Student's usually would.

Suffice it to say it's impossible to widen one's dantian to its limit without an unimaginable amount of energy.

"Pff!" Ye Wei who sat in a lotus position in the cocoon, opened his eyes and slowly exhaled. Immediately after he clenched his fist and felt the vast energy in his body. His face showed a happy smile.

'My cultivation is just a seven-star Student, but when it comes to my Sentient size and my dantian, I am as good as an ordinary nine-star student!'

'Stances! I can finally try to use mystic stances!' Ye Wei's eyes were glittering. He had been waiting for this day for too long, far too long.

'I still don't believe that I can't use mystic stances!' Ye Wei thought about how he failed Master Yi rune consonant test. About how he scored zero which meant that he could never use stances, and he bit his lips. The happiness in his heart and the excitement from his breakthrough was replaced by nervousness.

'No matter the result, I will overcome my fate!' Ye Wei kept biting his

lip as his eyes shone with determination. He was ready to try and use a mystic stance.

‘The White Tiger’s Assault is a low-level Mystic stance, Triple Plunder Sword is a high-level Spirit stance, and Windrift Steps is also a high-level Spirit stance with my current cultivation I would not have enough will-force or Qi to use any of these high-level stances. The stance I refined with Zi Yan though, Triple Tidal Palm is a mid-level Spirit stance; I can try that instead.’ Ye Wei thought, and started to picture the way Triple Tidal Palm was formed and the rune sequence that was used.

At the seven-star Student level, the will-force in Ye Wei’s Sentient and the Qi in his dantian could only support a low-level Spirit stance. There was hope, but Ye Wei was not sure if he could successfully perform the mid-level Spirit stance, Triple Tidal Palm.

‘Mid-level Spirit stance, Triple Tidal Palm!’ Inside the three meters tall cocoon, Ye Wei stood up and held his breath so he could focus better. He slowly raised his finger as strands of will-force were forming on it. At the same time Qi rushed out of his dantian.

With will-force as a quill and Qi as ink, Ye Wei started drawing mystic runes!

In the air, rune after rune was drawn by Ye Wei stroke after stroke.

“Eh?” While drawing the runes, Ye Wei was startled. He widened his eyes and stared at the runes. They were disappearing before he could even finish drawing them.

‘I’m too careless!’ Ye Wei slapped his forehead and shook his head while smiling embarrassingly.

Ye Wei had underestimated how difficult it was to perform a mystic stance; understanding how the runes are drawn and where they should be in the sequence is not enough.

To successfully complete a mystic stance one has to draw the runes quickly and perfectly coordinate their Qi flow. Only when both criteria were met will one see success.

It takes a lot of time to train if one wants to master a stance because determination and will are limited; therefore, no cultivator would be obsessed with how many mystic stances they learned but instead they would spend their time on perfecting the few they knew.

Chapter 78: Jade Crystal Wall

“It has been fifteen hours since the boy was trapped in the cocoon, I wonder what is happening to him in there...” Everyone looked worryingly at the three meters tall blood cocoon then at the passage that led deeper into the labyrinth. Their eyes showed a bit of resentment and anxiousness.

Luckily Ye Wei’s life signs had not disappeared, and there was still a Qi disturbance coming from the cocoon.

“Guys, you have recovered pretty well. You might as well head down the passageway. I will guard the cocoon, and everyone else can go search for more treasures. We can’t let those greedy b*stards take everything!” His sight then quickly returned to the cocoon. In his eyes, they were honorable for waiting so long.

“Hong Xun has a point, the treasures in this labyrinth are limited, and we can’t let those loathsome people get everything!” Xue Yao said angrily, her beautiful eyes scanned across everyone present as she stood up.

The passage was right in front of them. It was quite a feat that everyone could stay seated and guard the cocoon for fifteen hours just because of honor despite the depth of the labyrinth tempting them!

The group of cultivators opened their eyes simultaneously as they heard what Hong Xun said, and they glanced at each other to see if anyone else had the same hesitant look in their eyes. Of course, they wanted to leave, but their savior’s fate was still uncertain; if they were to leave now, their conscience would surely haunt them.

“Bang!”

Just as everyone was pondering and wondering if they should leave, a deafening noise came from the blood cocoon as it started rattling vigorously.

“Boom! Boom! Boom!” The same banging noise could be heard from the cocoon. “Crack!” With a loud cracking sound fissures started to appear on

its surface, and they quickly grow and covered the whole cocoon.

Just as everyone was staring at the cocoon, it cracked open, and they heard a sharp voice. “Thanks everyone for guarding me this long!” A handsome boy with a childish face slowly walked out with the iron talisman that suppressed the stone giant hanging on his waist.

“The boy survived the rage intent of the Blood Devourer crystals?! And he tamed the energy within them?” Seeing that Ye Wei had not lost his mind and that his presence was stronger than before, everyone was shocked and filled with joy.

Ye Wei was fine! They could finally continue the expedition with a clear conscience.

“Where is this boy from? He has so many tricks up his sleeves! Three medium-grade scrolls, and a talisman that could suppress the stone giant...” People’s eyes stopped on Ye Wei’s belt where the talisman was hung, looked at it with admiration while praising its power.

‘Just the three medium-grade scrolls would cost five hundred thousand silvers, and the talisman that suppressed the stone giant has got to be worth more than that! He is just a Student, yet he is carrying more than a million silver worth of goods on him!?’ This thought lingered in everyone’s minds. They were under the impression that Ye Wei had more valuable and powerful items in his possession as well.

Seeing that everyone was drooling over his talisman, Ye Wei felt slightly uneasy. He knew the talisman was a rare find, and it had unmeasurable value. Even though he was young, he knew that one should not put something valuable on display. Before Ye Wei stepped out of the cocoon he tried to put the talisman in his bag, but it just kept flying back out, so there was no other way!

With no other solutions, Ye Wei decided to hang the talisman on his belt. Although he did not feel safe, all the people outside the cocoon saw the talisman in action and knew he was not one to be messed with. Also, the ones that didn’t see it defeat the stone giant would not really pay it any attention, so Ye Wei was relatively safe contrary to his fears.

Hong Xun glared at Ye Wei to check if he really was feeling well. Afterwards, he turned to the crowd and reported, "He is okay! We can relax now and enter the passage!"

"Yea!" Xue Yao nodded.

"Let's go!"

"We can't let the treasures of this labyrinth fall into the hands of Lu Chao and his greedy followers!" Everyone was excited to get up and start moving. They had been waiting for this moment for fifteen hours.

"Let's go!" The hundreds of cultivators entered the passage behind Hong Xun and Xue Yao.

Ye Wei was also following the crowd closely, feeling very touched and grateful. He could still not quite believe these people wasted their time in the labyrinth guarding him when they could have been hunting for treasures. Ye Wei was a cautious person, but he couldn't help but taking a liking to the people who waited behind for him. He couldn't fathom that strangers could be so honorable.

'I don't regret helping you guys at all! If I had the same choice again, I would fight for everyone!' Ye Wei had been teased since he was a young boy because of his red Sentient, but he learned to trust people who gave him gratitude.

"This passage..." The moment they entered the passage, they were shocked. This passage was nothing like the two passages they had gone through before.

The first passage was a narrow tunnel with rune barriers and stone houses on each side. The second passage had nothing on its side walls, and it was no wider than fifteen meters. This passage, however, was over three hundred meters wide, and its walls were made of crystal. They were cool to the touch and glittered in the darkness. The surface was so smooth they could see their reflections!

"There are no signs of any fights here; we should be safe. Lu Chao and the rest entered this passage fifteen hours ago, so we have to speed up if

we want to catch up with them!” Hong Xun frowned as he could not see an end to the crystal passageway, so he signaled for everyone to speed up.

“We have to hurry!”

“This passage is very long; I can’t even see the end of it!”

“Let’s hurry!”

Everyone nodded and started running at full speed as they empowered their body with Qi and stances.

“Ha!”

Seeing everyone accelerating, Ye Wei who was watching from behind started smiling reluctantly.

Everyone was a Warriors while Ye Wei was only a Student, and on top of that Ye Wei had not learned any mystic stances. Despite having his Sentient and dantian the size of a nine-star Student, he could not even closely match the Warriors’ speed by a long stretch.

Just as Ye Wei was getting discouraged, one of the flashes ahead turned back towards him. He saw a blur and smelled an appealing fragrance.

“Hey little boy, do you want me to carry you?” Xue Yao’s charming face wore a mischievous smile, looking kindly at Ye Wei.

“Huh?” Ye Wei was distracted by her refreshing scent, and after a second, he raised his head to see a youthful, slender figure.

“N-no... No thanks! I can just run at my own pace!” Ye Wei answered with a blush on his face.

“Ha ha ha! Little boy, are you scared of me? I am not a monster, I don’t bite!” Xue Yao was amused by how shy Ye Wei was, and she couldn’t help herself from laughing flirtatiously.

Xue Yao was a beautiful girl on top of being one of the four strongest youngsters Frozen Sun City had ever seen, both of these made her a popular person with countless admirers. It was rare for her to meet someone so shy and modest, and she couldn’t help herself not to play with him.

“Uum... You’re a girl, and I’m a boy... It’s not really appropriate for you to carry me...” Lin Zi Yan’s face suddenly appeared in Ye Wei’s mind as he spoke.

“What are you thinking about!?” Xue Yao tried to contain herself but couldn’t stop laughing over Ye Wei’s overreaction. She quickly drew a sequence of runes in the air and it turned into a stance in no time.

“Is that Shadow Breeze? The Spirit stance?” Ye Wei was surprised.

“You know your stances!” Xue Yao was impressed by Ye Wei’s knowledge.

A powerful breeze formed behind Ye Wei and Xue Yao. Suddenly, Ye Wei felt ashamed that he had misunderstood Xue Yao, but it was kind of expected because he didn’t have much experience talking with girls, especially ones as pretty as Xue Yao.

“Follow me, if we are too slow, we won’t get anything. You’ve used five hundred thousand silvers worth of scrolls if you leave here empty handed it will be unfortunate!” Xue Yao smiled as splashes of green light from the stance shone on her face. The breeze materialized, and turned into two clouds. The breeze carried Xue Yao and Ye Wei causing them to catch up with the rest of the group at an incredible speed.

“We are going so fast!” With the cold breeze on his face, Ye Wei’s clothes were blown around and flapped in the air; he felt exhilaration riding the Qi clouds.

‘I have to learn a speed enhancing stance like this, or maybe one like the Shadowshift stance!’ Ye Wei was lagging behind in speed compared to others, and he clenched his fists as his will to learn stances grew even stronger.

“Zoom! Zoom! Zoom!” Xue Yao was indeed powerful. Although she was carrying the both of them, they caught up with Hong Xun and the rest of the Warriors in minutes.

Everyone used stances to boost their speed, but despite the fact that they were running as fast as they could, the end of the crystal passage

could not be seen at all. They had been on the move for more than an hour which with the Warriors' speed enhancing stances meant they had already covered over forty kilometers.

The magnificence and sheer size of the labyrinth made them wonder how and why it was built. The creator certainly had something tremendous in mind while building such a complex structure with so many security measures and attention to detail...

Everyone ground their teeth and ran in the hopes that they could catch up with that greedy bunch of ungrateful people. It wasn't long before they finally saw light at the end of the passageway.

At the end of the crystal passage was a jade crystal wall covered with countless runes. It looked hazy from a distance and gave the cultivators the feeling that they were in a crystal empire. In front of the tall crystal wall stood Lu Chao and the people who had left the field earlier. They looked annoyed and displeased due to the wall blocking their path.

Although Lu Chao and his followers arrived at the end of the passage before Ye Wei's group caught up, they still couldn't find a way through after more than ten hours of struggling.

Through the transparent jade crystal wall everyone could clearly see levitating mystic scrolls, jade scripts, pills, and mystic arms! The treasures were so close but yet so far!

Lu Chao and his men were desperate. They have been staring at this fortune guarded by the wall for more than half a day. Their souls felt entranced, their eyes were bloodshot, and their aggressive faces spoke for themselves.

"Oh, I remember you guys! Why are you all standing around? Were you waiting for us?" Somebody who was standing behind Hong Xun was amused by the swift karma and couldn't help but mock them.

"A jade crystal wall?" Hong Xun glanced at Lu Chao with disdain and quickly shifted his focus to the wall behind him. When he saw what was on the other side of the wall, his pupils dilated.

Xue Yao let go of Ye Wei's wrist and slowly walked towards the wall. Her playful face froze in shock as she saw what was behind the wall.

“What's that!?” Everyone else who just arrived also started to notice what was behind the jade crystal wall.

Chapter 79: Crazy Scramble

“Another rune barrier?!” Ye Wei said as he stood next to Xue Yao. He was also looking at the jade crystal wall, though his focus was not on the treasures, but on the runes that flowed within the wall.

Ye Wei’s soul sensibility was now as strong as a Runemaster’s after his remarkable dream a while ago, but upon reaching the seven-star Student stage it had improved even further. It only took him one glance to identify the wall as an advance rune barrier!

The runes that flowed slowly within the jade crystal wall were projected into Ye Wei’s eyes. Feeling fascinated, he just stood there as he observed and quickly learned the various changes and energy movements of this barrier. It was larger and a hundred times more complicated than the ones located in the other tunnels, and although Ye Wei’s soul sensibility had slightly matured, it was still impossible to make sense of the flow patterns within the barrier in such a short time.

“The boy is still alive?!” As Ye Wei stepped forward to get a better view of the barrier, Lu Chao and his followers’ eyes were stuck on the boy they were too greedy to care about. They found it hard to believe that he had survived. Lu Chao unconsciously clenched his fists, and although his life was saved by Ye Wei, he didn’t feel thankful at all.

He was aware of how aggressive the Qi in a Blood Devourer crystal was, not to mention Ye Wei was only a Student who had never faced his vicious inner demons before. Even Warriors couldn’t defend their minds against such a powerful energy contained within the crystals!

“How is this possible?!”

“Even if this boy had a way to deal with the mental pressure that the Blood Devourer crystals imposed, how can a Student’s body process the immense surge of dense primal energy!?” A perplexed look flashed across Lu Chao’s face. There was a glint of shock and disbelief in his eyes and also a trace of fear.

‘He is just a mere Student, and he not only used three medium-grade

scrolls, but also had a way to deal with that aggressive Qi!?' 'Neither medium-grade scroll or Qi suppressing items were commonly found in a Student's possession. It was apparent that this kid was no commoner!'

"Lu Chao, where are you hiding the treasures you found? I believe you promised to give half to this boy?" Xue Yao stood next to Ye Wei, and her cold gaze landed on Lu Chao as she inquired.

"Treasures?" Lu Chao's face immediately straightened as he stared at the dazzling variety of treasures behind the jade crystal wall, and his eyes started twitching.

He had been standing in front of the jade wall for more than ten hours now. He had tried everything he could think of, used every stance he knew of, but failed to get through the barrier. All he could do now was stare at his treasures; it was not hard to imagine how frustrated he was.

He was already feeling reckless and now that Xue Yao mentioned treasure, Lu Chao felt so angry he could almost spit fire!

"The treasures are right here in front of you, feel free to help yourself to them!" Lu Chao knew Xue Yao was trying to spite him, and he coldly stared at her as he pointed to the jade crystal wall.

Lu Chao and hundreds of Warriors had tried and failed!

Looking at the stern-faced Lu Chao, both Hong Xun and Xue Yao were concerned, 'He had half a day, but he could not get through the wall?' Not only were they concerned about breaking through the barrier, but they were also tempted by the treasures behind it.

"Is there no way to get through?"

Everyone started looking to Hong Xun, the eight-star Warrior, who was the strongest among them. The fact that Lu Chao could not break the barrier open was not the end of the world.

"Breaking the jade crystal wall?" Hong Xun was not confident, but at this time he could only give it everything he had!

Everyone was focused on Hong Xun and nobody was paying attention to

Ye Wei, who was standing still like a statue. Nobody would have ever imagined that he was actually analyzing the changes and the flow of these runes that none of them understood.

“Mystic stance – Golden Bell!”

Hong Xun aggressively took a step forward as a loud scream came out of his throat. Runes came from his fingers, and an immense bell appeared.

“Break!” Hong Xun’s fist ferociously smashed towards the jade crystal wall, and the golden bell on his fist started spinning rapidly. Rays of golden light reflected from the wall as the bell’s sharp edges got closer and closer looking like a dazzling drill from the distance.

“Boooooom!!”

The tremendous golden bell violently crashed into the barrier. The drill started spinning on the smooth surface creating a rippling pressure wave, and this caused the flowing runes on the wall to accelerate. Shortly after contact, an enormous recoil struck the golden bell.

“Crack!”

A million fractures spread across the golden bell, and the next moment with a thunderous sound it shattered. Hong Xun’s face turned ashen white, and he took seven steps backwards as blood slowly flowed down the corner of his mouth.

“Failure!”

“Hong Xun failed to break the jade crystal wall!”

“A few hundred Warriors together had been stopped by the barrier and the strongest Hong Xun failed as well. Who can breakthrough this jade crystal wall?”

The tunnel behind them was blocked, and in front of them was an impenetrable jade crystal wall blocking their path and the treasures.

“No! This is unfair, too unfair! Will we die here?”

“Break! Break! Break for me!” Seeing that Hong Xun had been knocked back, a lot of the Warriors became hopeless. They growled and charged

towards the jade crystal wall, punching it in desperation.

“I stepped into Bloodmist Valley and experienced this many dangers only to obtain a low-grade mystic arm! Now I am trapped and will probably die here...” Hong Xun stared at the barrier as he wiped away the blood from the corner of his mouth. A self-deprecating smile was present on his modest face.

“Sigh...” Xue Yao who stood next to Ye Wei shook her head disappointedly, she needed to start thinking about alternative solutions.

While everyone was afraid, not knowing what else they could do, the runes were starting to make sense to Ye Wei. He twisted and cracked his stiff neck then his lips slightly curled up, forming a confident smile while staring at the jade crystal wall, he slowly walked up to it.

“Little bro?” Xue Yao who stood next to Ye Wei could see that he had started walking towards the wall, and she was confused. She grabbed his wrist to stop him, and there was a sense of worry in her clear eyes, “Hong Xun is an eight-star Warrior and even he got injured by this jade crystal wall, you shouldn’t try just let others figure it out!”

Xue Yao was afraid Ye Wei would get hurt.

“But there is no other choice. We’re stuck here anyway, and if I don’t at least give it a try I will never forgive myself for not contributing. Maybe... maybe I can break the jade crystal wall?” Ye Wei turned his head to look at the caring Xue Yao, he blinked and smile as he spoke.

“You think so?” Xue Yao said as she looked at Ye Wei’s confident smile. She was startled. This mysterious boy who stood in front of her was shrouded in secrets, and she couldn’t figure him out.

She then thought about how Ye Wei had used three medium-grade scrolls, and how this ordinary looking but powerful talisman had suppressed even the best quality Blood Devourer crystals so she decided to let him try and let go of his wrist.

“Look quickly! That boy is walking towards the jade crystal wall!”

“It’s that boy again, is he going to make a move?”

“He is fourteen at most but there are so many secrets hidden on him...”

“Maybe he, really can break the jade crystal wall!” Someone from the crowd said as everyone’s eyes focused on Ye Wei. Their depressed mood was lifted and now they were nervous and excited waiting to see what happened.

While everyone was spectating, Ye Wei walked up to the wall and slowly extended his hand, gently placing it on the barrier.

Ye Wei did not use any Qi, and therefore when he placed his hand on the barrier there was no recoil. Ye Wei slowly exhaled, and his eyebrows twitched slightly as strands of will-force leaked out of his palm and rushed into the jade crystal barrier in front of him

Ye Wei used his own will-force to move the runes in the jade crystal wall!

Buzz! Buzz! Buzz!

Controlled by Ye Wei’s will-force the flow of runes inside the wall was slightly altered. There were more than ten thousand runes flowing within and with the strength of Ye Wei’s will-force, he could not make any big alterations.

Ye Wei’s hand rested on the wall with his eyes closed. Just like that he stood still. It looked like he was not doing anything, but in reality Ye Wei was doing everything he could forcing his will-force to change the flow of the runes.

Will-force was draining at a fearful speed, and Ye Wei’s face was slowly turning white. Drops of sweat appeared on his forehead and the glittering drops ran down his face.

“Open!” After an hour, Ye Wei’s closed eyes violently opened. He opened his mouth and grunted.

Boooom!!

With Ye Wei’s grunt, the huge jade crystal wall suddenly shook violently. At this moment everyone’s eyes went wide with shock as if they

saw some something unbelievable.

While everyone was shocked, the jade crystal wall slowly opened to the left and right side. There was nothing but empty space between them and the superb collection of treasures!

Hum! Hum! Hum!

Everyone stared at the large amount of treasures that were as numerous as stars in the sky, and their eyes suddenly became bloodshot. Their breathing became heavy and the way they looked at the mountain of treasures was how a perverted old man looks at a naked women, lustfully, greedily, crazed!

Looking at the treasures in front of him, Lu Chao's eyes became blood red, he was shaking from ecstasy.

Hong Xun and Xue Yao both inhaled the cold air as their eyes became fiery.

Ye Wei, who opened the jade crystal wall, spotted something strange while looking at the mountain of treasures. He was confused and puzzled, unlike others there was no greed or crazed expression on his face!

"How can this be?" Ye Wei could not believe that his Runemaster's level of soul sensibility was telling him that this collection of treasures was actually a hologram!

These holograms were too realistic, even Hong Xun, Xue Yao, and Lu Chao did not notice.

"Take 'em!"

"Go, take everything!" After a brief moment of silence, everyone became crazy. Being in front of this much treasure even the most humble person wouldn't be able to control their greed.

The scene became chaotic in a matter of seconds. People started fighting each other before they even went through the jade crystal wall.

Tsss! Tss!

"Careful!" In the chaos there were at least three to four swords that

shot Qi towards Ye Wei. Seeing this, Xue Yao and Hong Xun's faces straightened; they arrived in front of Ye Wei almost at the same time guarding him.

Now that the wall was opened, nobody could control themselves, and nobody could take control not even Xue Yao or Hong Xun. Everyone was just running around fighting, they didn't even care who the other people were.

Unless it was an existence like Jin Yan or Mo Ya who had the power to crush everyone at once, nobody else could keep the crazy crowd's attention, let alone try to keep them under control.

"Everything is mine! All mine!" Nobody move!" In the chaos, Lu Chao used his strength to get himself to the front. Nobody knew when, but suddenly there were scrolls in his hands. They were low-grade scrolls, and there was a total of five.

"Rip!"

There was a grim smile on Lu Chao's face, and without hesitation he directly tore one of the scrolls.

Chapter 80: Mirages

The moment the scroll was torn, hundreds of runes rained down, and the light it generated was blinding. The stance summoned a spectral bull in front of everyone.

This bull was ten meters tall, and its green skin had a metallic texture. It was surrounded by furious flames that came off it like stars shooting in the sky, an immense and fearsome pressure spread as the bull appeared.

Forbidden Spirit stance, Starry Bull!

“These treasures are all mine! don’t you dare move an inch!” There was a bloodthirsty smile on Lu Chao’s grim face. His crazed eyes stared at the swarm of Warriors.

“Kill!” With Lu Chao’s scream, the enormous bull howled and warmed up his muscular legs then charged mercilessly at the crowd.

“Roar!” The Starry Bull rushed out crashing into the crowd. It sent fifteen Warriors who stood at the front directly into the air. The Starry Bull’s fearsome power immediately shattered their bones to pieces, and some of the Warrior’s even had their organs torn apart.

“Lu Chao, I will haunt you!” Sorrowful cries echoed throughout the passageway.

The fifteen Warriors who took the impact were all on the floor, and their bodies were paralyzed and shaking. Everyone could hear their horrifying cries as pieces of their organs were spit up as they coughed and tried to clear their airways. It was obvious they didn’t have long to live!

With one charge the Starry Bull took more than ten lives!

Seeing this bloody scene, everyone was stunned and started shivering with fear. They widened their eyes, and their pupils dilated as if someone emptied a bucket of icy cold water over their heads. A cold sweat ran down their backs and within moments they were drenched in sweat.

Moments ago these fifteen Warriors were lively and collided with the

rest of the crowd, but now they were lying on the ground lifelessly; this bone-chilling scene woke everyone up from their crazed state.

“Retreat!”

“Retreat, retreat!” There was horror in everyone’s eyes while they watched the rampaging Starry Bull. They turned around and retreated together; nobody dared to take one step forward.

“Lu Chao!”

“Have you lost your bloody mind?” The crowd backed off twenty meters to make sure they were not in the range of the Starry Bull. They stared angrily at the bloodthirsty Lu Chao who was standing behind the Bull.

“Forbidden Spirit stance!” Hong Xun and Xue Yao who were guarding Ye Wei glared at the Starry Bull cautiously.

Nobody expected Lu Chao would have this kind of scrolls on him!

While everyone had been putting their lives on the line to fight the stone giants, Lu Chao did not make a move. Who would have thought he was hiding this kind of trump card?

Now that he had a chance to get his hands on the treasures he finally showed his true colors.

Although Lu Chao was controlling a forbidden level Spirit stance, he was looking at Ye Wei with fear in his eyes. He was ready to use all the other scrolls if Ye Wei joined the fight.

According to his plan, if he could stop Ye Wei, he would have a chance to get all these treasures. He could then use some of the weapons in this mountain of treasures to fight the crowd.

“Lu Chao, do you not plan on sharing?” Hong Xun’s face went black, his cold glare penetrated the semi-transparent bull and landed on Lu Chao.

“Lu Chao, there are a lot of treasures here, can you take them all? You will choke on them!” Xue Yao’s pretty face was ice cold, and her slender hands were clenched. She started to channel her Qi and was ready for a fight.

When they fought the stone puppets, Lu Chao was hiding in the back, and now he turned against everyone when there were rare treasures to be obtained. He even dared to use a mystic scroll and kill fifteen Warriors; this kind of selfish, uncaring behavior enraged the crowd, everyone was fired up!

‘Idiot!’ Ye Wei shouted in his mind. His face was also ashened as he never thought the friendly man who had welcomed him could be so vicious.

‘All these scrolls, mystic arms, pills, rare metals, and herbs are all mirages, and you were stupid enough to enrage everyone and even kill for what’s not real. I would like to see how you get yourself out of this mess!’

“Well, Lu Chao even if you can collect all the treasures here, do you think you can get out of this labyrinth?” Hong Xun angrily shouted with a voice as clear as a church bell while he stared straight at Lu Chao.

“Lu Chao, you should think twice before making any more stupid decisions!”

“Are you really this selfish? Even Jin Yan and Mo Ya, strong as they are, had the courtesy to leave seven mystic arms for us to contest over. Who do you think you are?” Everyone’s cold gaze was pointed at Lu Chao through the fading Starry Bull.

“I, Lu Chao, do whatever I want, and you have no grounds to boss me around! If you think you can stop me then step forward. If you don’t have the guts to actually do something about it, shut up!” Lu Chao held the four shiny scrolls tight and sneered at the crowd as he shouted disdainfully.

“You!” Everyone angrily pointed their fingers at Lu Chao as their bodies shivered in anger, but although they were extremely crossed, nobody dared to move an inch.

Medium-grade scrolls contained Myst stances; that was a known fact. There was a medium-grade scroll in Lu Chao’s hand, and the fifteen bodies on the floor was a horrifying example of how they might end up if they decided to fight Lu Chao. Even though they were angry, nobody

wanted to end up losing their lives so horribly.

The treasures were alluring, but they won't be able to enjoy any wealth or power if they were dead!

Although everyone was aware that the forbidden stance Lu Chao was in control of could only kill thirty of them at most before its power faded and that if they were to attack together, they would be able to take him down, nobody was willing to take that risk it. Especially when Lu Chao had four more scrolls in his hand.

"You!" Xue Yao's knuckles were cracking from her fury, feeling furious and driven by her impulses, she started drawing a rune sequence in the air., She was ready to attack in despite the odds being stacked up against her.

Right as Xue Yao was about to launch herself towards Lu Chao, Ye Wei raised his arm and blocked her way.

"If he likes the treasure so much, we should just let him take all he wants!" Ye Wei casually glared at Lu Chao with a sarcastic smile on his face.

"Huh?" Xue Yao held her step, and she looked at Ye Wei confused. Ye Wei had used three medium-grade scrolls in total just to defeat the puppets, how could he be so calm? Isn't he mad about possibilities of returning empty handed?

If Lu Chao gets ahold of the treasure, he will become even stronger and harder to deal with.

"Just leave him be. Just because you can see something doesn't mean that it exists!" Ye Wei whispered to Xue Yao, who just looked even more confused after his explanation.

'Doesn't exist?' Xue Yao's clear eyes widened as she pointed at the levitating treasures and looked back at the indifferent Ye Wei. She hesitated and then stepped back to where Ye Wei stood.

"Ha! That's what I'm talking about!" Lu Chao said dwelling in complacency he stared at the crowd and turned around to look at the

mountain of treasures that waited for him. He licked his lips and couldn't take his greedy eyes off what was his.

"It's mine. It's all mine! Hahaha!" Lu Chao laughed in his mind. He knew nobody here would be a threat if he was to use the scrolls he had been hiding from everyone's sight this whole time!

When Lu Chao obtained these treasures, his strength would increase tenfold; he would be safe inside the labyrinth. When he stepped back into the outside world, he would be in even safer hands, his granddad. A condensed prime Warrior, who went by the name Lu Zhong Tian, was waiting for him to return.

Lu Zhong Tian was a four-star condensed prime Warrior, and being protected by granddad, even Jin Yan and Mo Ya would not be able to stop Lu Chao.

Lu Chao felt no fear as he enthusiastically looked a mystic arm close to himself. With a proud smile on his face, he reached out for the levitating axe.

The moment he extended his arm his proud smile disappeared and the fire in his eyes vanished only to be replaced by shock.

"How can this be?!" Lu Chao was startled by how his hand went right through the axe. He felt humiliated and screamed in disbelief.

A mirage!

The mystic arm was a mirage?

"No! No, No way, No way!" Lu Chao had wasted the Starry Bull scroll he treasured for years. He had offended and terrorized everyone, including Hong Xun and Xue Yao, who were his friends. Never did he imagine that everything was a mirage. He could not accept this ending, and he would not accept it.

Lu Chao started acting even crazier. He leaped around and tried to snatch all the scrolls, pills, and weapons in the air only to find out that they were all fakes.

Mirage, mirages, they are all mirages!

Everyone was at first shocked, and moments after gloating smiles appeared on their faces. Words could not describe the joy in their hearts. If the treasures were real and they fell into Lu Chao's hands, the consequences would be disastrous!

In the end, Lu Chao got nothing but humiliation.

Even Hong Xun, who had an extremely dry sense of humor was wearing a sneer on his otherwise serious face. He enjoyed himself while watching Lu Chao frantic behavior.

"Little bro, how... how did you know that they were not real?" Xue Yao widened her adorable puppy eyes and asked Ye Wei in a surprised tone. She really couldn't tell that the treasures were mirages before Lu Chao tried to grab them. They looked too realistic!

Her gorgeous eyes stared at Ye Wei, and she started to replay the scenes when Ye Wei defeated the stone giant. How he survived the blood cocoon without a scratch. She was getting increasingly curious about Ye Wei's background and wanted explanations.

"About that... I will tell you later. We should get our hands on the real treasure for now; it is right in front of us!" Ye Wei smiled, and as he said that there was a golden flash in his eyes. He then looked beyond Lu Chao onto the four crystal pillars at the back of the chamber.

"Follow me, and keep your eyes on Lu Chao's scrolls!" Ye Wei could not be bothered to explain everything at once as he whispered to Xue Yao and Hong Xun while leading them towards the back of the chamber.

"The real treasure?" Hong Xun, Xue Yao's eyes brightened. They looked at each other and then turned their focus onto the four pillars Ye Wei was talking about.

Chapter 81: Interspatial Runes

Everyone saw Ye Wei lead Hong Xun and Xue Yao over to the four enormous crystal pillars, so they followed; nobody was paying attention to Lu Chao as he was still shocked and glued to the floor.

Although everyone hated Lu Chao, nobody wanted to pick a fight with him now because he still had four scrolls in his hand.

Ye Wei quietly stood before the four massive pillars. He raised his head and frowned as he inspected the crystal pillar. Xue Yao and Hong Xun were acting like his bodyguards standing close to him on his left and right respectively.

With a lot of unanswered questions regarding the treasures, everyone else stood a bit further away and looked curiously at the three.

‘What’s with these crystal pillars? Are they booby trapped?’

While the cultivators were confused and theorizing, Ye Wei slowly extended his arm in from of the crystal pillar and placed his hand on it. After a murmur, he took his hand back and walked up to another pillar to repeat the process.

After inspecting all four crystal pillars, Ye Wei gently took a deep breath and nodded thoughtfully as he turned towards the crowd.

“These are spatial runes repository that contain treasures hidden in each of the pillars. The treasure you saw were a projection of what is inside these spatial runes. The person who set this up made it so the treasures stored the runes were projected into the chamber. Considering everyone’s strength, you should be able to break the pillar at the front easily.” Then he pointed to the two pillars further in the back and said, “These two pillars will be a bit harder to break, but Hong Xun and Xue Yao should be able to handle them. As for the last pillar...” Ye Wei paused and sincerely looked over the crowd. “The fourth one here is tougher than the jade crystal wall; it cannot be opened by force!”

“You guys can break these three pillars open and then share whatever

treasures are inside of the interspatial runes as for the last pillar, I will deal with it. If I am lucky enough to break it open, I will take everything that's inside, any opinions?" Ye Wei said in a modest tone.

Ye Wei could feel the four sources causing a great Qi disturbance even before entering the chamber. After having inspected the pillars where the energy was coming from he could tell that it was because of four interspatial runes and the vast amount of treasures stored within them.

'The fourth pillar, the one at the back, feels like a high-grade interspatial rune.'

Ye Wei's words shook them, and everyone suddenly was surprised. Their eyes lit up, and they stepped forward a few steps for a closer look.

"There are what in the pillars?"

Spatial rune repositories were very rare. Only Runemasters, who had mastered the complex interspatial rune system, were capable of inscribing these magical symbols. It was said in legends that the highest grade interspatial runes could even hold a whole city!

Ye Wei used three medium-grade scrolls to get the cultivators out of a deadly situation, and now he had opened the jade crystal wall that was impenetrable to everyone else. Without him, all the cultivators wouldn't even know where the real treasures were hidden.

If it weren't for Ye Wei, there wouldn't be treasures to share or lives to live. Asking for a quarter of the treasures seemed reasonable to everyone.

"I do not want any more bloodshed. Ever since I stepped into this labyrinth, all I've seen was fighting and conflicts. So many lives were lost for stupid and selfish reasons. I only have one requirement. No matter what is stored in those repositories, you guys can not fight each other for them; instead, you are to distribute them according to your cultivation levels. It's not exactly fair, but it is as close as it gets!"

Everyone looked at each other and realized it was the fear of death that made them kill each other!

"If you agree then swear to the cosmos; make a heavenly oath not to

fight each other! Only after will teach you how to crack open these pillars!" Ye Wei exhaled gently and requested with a friendly smile on his face.

Hearing Ye Wei's touching speech, everyone was looking down thinking back to how excessively aggressive and ruthless they have been. The fire was no longer in their eyes; instead, it was replaced by a gentle solemnness.

Ye Wei was the only person here who knew the repositories existed. He could have very well waited until everyone left the chamber and then took all the treasure for himself, but he decided against it. The cultivators recognized his generosity. They could not imagine what kind of family he was from, and how well he was brought up!

A few of the Warriors raised their heads and made an effort to memorize Ye Wei's face and swore to themselves that if the opportunities arises to repay him in the future, they would do so no matter the cost.

"I swear on the heavens."

"I also swear on the heavens!" After a brief moment of silence, everyone raised their heads and looked at Ye Wei with the utmost respect.

Soon all the cultivators followed. If they were to break the oath then the wrath of the heavens, the will of the cosmos, would strike down and render them asunder. Throughout the history of time, there wasn't one soul that challenged this powerful oath to the heavens and survived.

Seeing that everyone made a vow, Ye Wei felt relieved. After all, there really were a great many treasures stored within these four repositories. After having used up all three offensive scrolls he was given, he was not confident in surviving if another brawl were to break out.

Treasures in the three lower-ranked repositories were to be shared between a few hundred, and Ye Wei had one repository all for himself. He was very satisfied with the arrangement.

Greed was not a respectable trait in Ye Wei's eyes, and he wouldn't be greedy. If he were to act greedy who knew what the other cultivators would do?

After telling others where the pillars' weak spots were, Ye Wei walked over to the pillar at the back.

Hong Xun and Xue Yao watched Ye Wei's silhouette. Their eyes were bright, and they were amused by how Ye Wei, this fourteen year old, had handled the situation even better and fairer than they, themselves, could have.

"Let's break the first pillar!"

Hong Xun led everyone to the first crystal pillar. They had all made a heavenly oath and therefore were very relaxed as they knew no one would dare break it.

The crowd started to work on the first pillar, while at the back of the chamber Ye Wei placed his hands on the fourth pillar. He closed his eyes, and his eyebrows twitched slightly as strands of will-force leaked into the pillar from his Sentient. His will-force interacted with the runes flowing inside the pillar.

At this moment, nobody was looking at Lu Chao. He was no longer seen as a threat to anybody because they were bound by a heavenly oath. They would now have to act as a group and defend each other. Even if Lu Chao had ten scrolls, he would never be able to take down a few hundred Warriors by himself.

"Damn it... Damn it! Why did it turn out like this? Why are they all mirages?!" Surrounded and guarded by a few five and six star Warriors Lu Chao's eyes were bloodshot. He ground his teeth and growled, hatefully glaring at the crowd.

"It's all because of him!"

Lu Chao's hateful eyes darted to the other side of the chamber landing on Ye Wei, 'If it weren't for Ye Wei, these guys would never have united; they would still fear me!'

If everyone were not bound by the oath, it wouldn't be difficult for Lu Chao to take at least one of the repositories. He might not even have had to use all four of his scrolls due to the fear in the hearts of everyone

present.

However, the tables had turned, and now Lu Chao had to be alert. The group of Warriors could turn against him and eradicate him if he showed any signs of resistance.

‘I will never forgive you, never!’ Lu Chao’s bloodthirsty eyes stared at nothing but Ye Wei. If a gaze could kill, Ye Wei would have died a thousand times.

BANG! BOOM! BANG!

Led by Hong Xun and Xue Yao, the few hundred Warriors relentlessly attacked the crystal pillar. Every single one of them used their best stances in the hopes it would get the job done.

Qi swords, flames, ice, spectral beasts, and all different kinds of stances focused onto the first pillar, and under the immense wave of attacks, a small crack finally appeared.

“Good!”

The cultivators started to smile enthusiastically when they saw the crack and doubled their efforts.

As for Ye Wei, he was still standing quietly in front of the fourth pillar. He was frowning from time to time, and smiling occasionally when he understood more and more about the runic lock on the fourth pillar.

Ye Wei being able to break the rune barriers on the tunnel and the jade crystal wall was no accident. He had been relying on his soul sensibility without understanding how it really worked. The rune barrier on this pillar was even more complex than the one in the jade crystal wall, and his slow progress was the result of its complexity.

An hour had passed without anyone noticing, then suddenly a deafening noise echoed throughout the chamber. The first pillar was finally cracked open by brute force!

A flash of bright light blinded everyone in the chamber as strands of runes leaked out of the crack on the pillar, “A Rune repository!”

Everyone's eyes focused on the interspatial runes as they regained vision; they were breathing heavily as their treasures were now within reach.

The repository shrank on Hong Xun's touch, and he grabbed ahold of it tight throwing it in his interspatial bag.

"Keep up the good work! To the second pillar!" Hong Xun shouted while looking at everyone. "We will share them when we have broken all three pillars open. Let's not get distracted!"

"Okay!"

"Hahaha! That sounds reasonable! Keep it up guys!" Everyone was feeling light-hearted, they weren't worried that Hong Xun was going to cheat them at all. Everyone was smiling brightly as they approached the second pillar.

"Is that a storage rune?!"

Lu Chao saw the rune in Hong Xun's hand from the other side of the chamber as jealousy was eating him up. He was on the edge of losing his sanity. He clenched his fist and punched the crystal floor violently to release his anger; his venomous stare roamed around.

"They got the repository... So what? I doubt they can actually open them..." Lu Chao clenched his scrolls tight as he planned his comeback.

After two more hours, the second pillar broke open, and the group got their hands on the second repository.

After hours of using stances, every was exhausted. They all took some pills and rested briefly before they moved on to the third pillar.

The third pillar was tougher than the second one. Even though Hong Xun and Xue Yao led the cultivators to attack the weak spots, it still took them almost five hours to crack the pillar.

"Finally!" Hong Xun shouted as he grabbed the third runic repository. Everyone was so eager to see what was in the runes they forgot how tired they were.

"Not yet!" Just as Hong Xun was going to try to open the runic

repositories, Xue Yao stepped forward and stopped him. She then pointed to Ye Wei, who was still standing in front of the fourth pillar.

“Wait for him!” Xue Yao scanned the eager crowd and said.

“These three pillars... They were harder to crack the deeper into the chamber we moved. Obviously, the one furthest back must be the hardest of them all to crack. If that boy fails to open the fourth pillar, we shall share what we’ve acquired with him!” Xue Yao said with a determined tone.

“Yes, I agree!” Hong Xun nodded and looked at everyone, “I don’t think anyone here objects, right?”

Chapter 82: Rewards

“That’s fine by me. If that boy can’t open the fourth pillar, he can get a share of the treasure from our three repositories. He has contributed way more than any of us here; hell, I would be fine if he gets a larger share than myself!”

“My life was saved by this boy! He generously used three scrolls altogether; three medium-grade scrolls to save us. He can take more off my share if you guys are stingy!”

Everyone expressed their views as they looked at Ye Wei only to see how pale his face had become after hours of effort. His forehead was shiny with sweat, and it was apparent that Ye Wei was tired; It was obvious that cracking the fourth pillar was no easy task.

Nobody disagreed. Everyone was more than happy to share their treasure although some of the cultivators weren’t as vocal. They all knew the reason they were able to come this far.

The runic repositories were now in their possession, and with the oath in place, there was no way that anyone would betray the rest of the group. Because they were in no hurry, everyone sat back down to cultivate, recovering their Qi and will-force while they waited for Ye Wei.

After an hour, everyone could see that Ye Wei was completely exhausted from the way he was standing and trembling. A few of them stood up ready to catch him when he fell.

“If there is no way, you should give up!”

“Little brother, just forget about it... You’ve tried your best; we can see it, and you know it. We will give you double from our treasure! Please don’t hurt yourself!” People were walking up to Ye Wei to show their concern. They couldn’t take their eyes off his shaky body.

“Open!!” People were about to help Ye Wei down and force him to rest, but he suddenly opened his eyes and howled.

Crack, crack, crack!

As Ye Wei's howl echoed in the chamber, and the fourth crystal pillar vibrated vigorously. Suddenly a small crack appeared on it.

Through the crack on the pillar, Ye Wei could see something shiny. He slowly exhaled with a mild smile on his face. He then put his trembling hand through the crack and grabbed the runic repository.

"Sorry, I've make you guys wait again!" Ye Wei's face was ashen as he looked at everyone's caring expression and apologized sincerely.

"Let's split them!" Hong Xun announced. He and everyone else was happy that Ye Wei managed to crack the fourth pillar open. They were relieved that he was okay. Nobody cared if that meant they would have a larger share.

"Wohoo! Let's share the treasures!"

"This was trip was worth the risk and the wait!"

With everyone's eyes on him, Hong Xun grunted and channeled his Qi. One by one he opened all three runic repositories, and all of a sudden the small runes expanded rapidly and opened up. They shone a blindingly across the whole chamber. Then pieces of treasures appeared before them, and after a brief look, he estimated there were at least a hundred pieces of treasure in each repository!

That included manuscripts on different stances, cultivating formulas, mystic scrolls that glowed black, valuable metals, and rare pills.

The impressive collection of treasures shocked everyone deeply. They couldn't speak or move their eyes away from the massive pile of treasure.

Just when Hong Xun was about to start dividing up the treasures, Lu Chao slowly walked towards the other cultivators.

"I will take my share!"

"I don't want much, just one piece!" Lu Chao's greedy eyes moved towards the sparkling treasures.

"Count you in? Why?!" Hong Xun, Yue Yao, and the rest started chuckling as if they just heard the most ridiculous joke.

“Lu Chao, what is your skin made of? It’s so thick I almost find it impressive! You should consider yourself lucky that we did not kill you! Why on earth would you expect a share?”

“Back off! Or we will attack!”

“How dare you even think about getting anything? How have you contributed? By trying to kill us?”

“Take your hands off the treasures, otherwise!” Lu Chao’s eyes were completely red because of the few hundred pieces of treasure right in front of him. The temptation was driving him crazy; he just wanted something, even if it was just one item.

When Ye Wei opened this chamber, Lu Chao tore a scroll. It was not a medium-grade scroll, but the stance within was a rare forbidden stance worth a ridiculous amount.

Having used a Mystic scroll, he was determined to get something back for what he invested. If he ended up not even getting one item, he wouldn’t be able to live with himself.

“I know you guys took an oath, but I, Lu Chao, would like to see if you really have the balls to fight me. I have four scrolls here; I can kill at least fifty of you. If nothing else I can at least say I tried to obtain some treasure!”

“Whoever I attack will surely die!” Lu Chao’s face was twisted, and his crazy red eyes swept across the chamber.

Lu Chao wanted a part of the treasure so much he was ready to die trying!

Hearing what Lu Chao said, everyone’s face darkened. They stared at him and the four scrolls in his hand. Even if they work together to bring him down casualties are unavoidable!

“Shameless!”

Xue Yao was furious! Her face was pale from anger, and she wanted nothing more than to turn Lu Chao into dust.

“Well, I think it’s better to have one less thing to worry about. I’d rather have him keep quiet instead of constantly threatening us! Even if he does get a share, someone would probably kill him on the way out, and we can just take it back then.” Someone in the crowd signed and said loudly in a reluctant tone.

Just as they were about to give Lu Chao an item under the pressure, Ye Wei slowly stepped forward.

“You think you’re worthy? Ye Wei looked straight into Lu Chao’s eyes as he spoke in a cold tone.

Everyone paused and looked at Ye Wei.

Hong Xun also looked at Ye Wei, and he shook his head signaling him to stand down. If Lu Chao wanted something, he could have it. There were plenty of treasures to go around, and even if everyone took an item, there would still be plenty more. Just one item was not a heavy price to pay if that meant everyone would be able to leave safely. They could find another chance to get rid of Lu Chao in the future and avenge the innocent lives he took.

“Little bro, just leave it be. No matter what he obtains today, his reputation is ruined regardless. I will personally make his life hell in Frozen Sun City from now on!” Xue Yao added, her cold glare never leaving Lu Chao.

Ye Wei slightly frowned. He shook his head determinedly; he did not believe Lu Chao would use the four scrolls, ‘He’s just trying to bluff himself into getting some treasure, he doesn’t have the guts to put his life at stake; he is a coward.’

“You have four low-grade scrolls. I would like to see you kill someone while I’m here!” Ye Wei swiftly took out his green glowing scrolls from his bag.

“I can always test these two medium-grade scrolls. They are both defensive scrolls. It will be interesting to see if my scroll can nullify yours.” Ye Wei was staring right into Lu Chao’s eyes and said loudly.

“Defensive medium-grade scrolls? Two of them!?” As Lu Chao looked at the two green scrolls in Ye Wei’s hand, his face turned ashen and his pupils dilated.

“You... are you crazy!? Two medium-grade scrolls! They are worth at least three hundred thousand silver. I just wanted one item, an item that’s far less valuable than what you will spend fighting me!”

“What’s your problem!? Why would you waste your medium-grade scrolls like this? Were not even talking about your share of treasure! Can’t you just mind your own business?” Lu Chao’s eyes twitched as he angrily tried to confront Ye Wei. His voice broke, and his eyes widened as he stared at Ye Wei.

Seeing Ye Wei had two more medium-grade scrolls in his possession, everyone gasped. This kid... How rich is he?

Counting the three medium-grade scrolls he used while fighting the stone puppets, Ye Wei had shown five medium-grade scrolls to the cultivators in total. They were under the impression that Ye Wei had more in his bag as well, and that was why he was using them like they were worth nothing.

Where is this boy from? Isn’t he too privileged? He’s just a mere Student, but he can use five scrolls so casually? That’s five medium-grade scrolls!!

Five medium-grade scrolls that mentally shocked everyone present. Back in Green Moon City, even a Warrior from the prominent families like the Du’s could not use five scrolls like Ye Wei had.

In all of Green Moon City, apart from Master Yi, the City Lord, and the principle of South Star Academy nobody would be able to use five scrolls like this without second thoughts!

Something that in some martial families would priceless family treasures were now used so casually by this Student, there was no way they could keep their cool.

“Why? Me and you, we’ve had no disagreements and a decent

relationship! Why are you now picking on me?!” Lu Chao felt intimidated by Ye Wei.

“I don’t like the way you do things!” Ye Wei shrugged and said casually, “You are going to put your life at stake for a share of the treasure right? Why don’t you just tear your scrolls? Come on, don’t waste everyone’s time!”

“These are just medium-grade scrolls only worth a few hundred thousand silver. I could care less!” Ye Wei casually looked at the scrolls in his hand and spoke indifferently.

Ye Wei and Lin Zi Yan had got their hands on a lot of valuable items including the Silver Moon pills and the repository he just acquired. With that in mind, these two medium-grade scrolls really were dispensable for him.

“You don’t like how I do things? Just because of that and you are going to use two medium-grade scrolls?” Lu Chao’s jaws dropped. His mind went blank as he stared at Ye Wei, “I refuse to believe you really will use them just to fight me!” Lu Chao looked even more aggressive than before. He didn’t want to just back down.

“You can try. Try and see if really will use these two scrolls. I will lose my scrolls yes, but do you really dare fight me? If you do your life ends here!” Ye Wei’s beckoning glare was set on Lu Chao as he spit out threatening words.

With two medium-grade scrolls for safety, the Warriors around Lu Chao started to channel their Qi and slowly walked towards where he stood.

If Ye Wei did use these medium-grade scrolls, then suffice to say Lu Chao did not stand a chance!

“Okay, okay you got me!” Lu Chao aggressively stared back at Ye Wei. He put his scrolls back into his bag. He stomped the ground and with a speed boosting stance he turned into a flash, a flash that disappeared into the passage at the back of the chamber.

Gamble with his life? Lu Chao was just bluffing. He was banking on

everyone getting scared if he tried to stand his ground, but he never expected Ye Wei would be generous enough to use two medium-grade scrolls to call his bluff.

Now there was no point to stay here any longer. There was no way he would stay and watch them split the treasures. Lu Chao wouldn't be able to deal with the envy and jealousy. Although he was crazy, he knew when to let it go. He was sure he would be able to find more items in the passageway ahead, even deeper into the labyrinth.

"You guys are safe now! Split the treasures!" Ye Wei put the scrolls back into his bag when he could no longer feel Lu Chao's Qi. Nobody really knew, but Ye Wei was actually just bluffing too. Like Lu Chao, he wouldn't really waste his scrolls to fight one person.

There were no signs of Welkin Leaves in the pile of treasures. There were eight trimmings of other rare herbs, but none of them matched Master Yi's description.

'The fourth pillar was the toughest one to break, and the repository was made with a much more advanced interspatial rune. I wonder what kind of treasures it holds...' While Hong Xun and Xue Yao started distributing the treasure, Ye Wei looked at the repository in his hand and thought.

'I hope there are Welkin Leaves!' Ye Wei clenched his fist tightly. Ever since he had entered Bloodmist Valley, he obtained a lot of things and had vastly improved his cultivation level exponentially. Although he was happy for everything he had achieved, none of this was what he came here for.

'I came here because it was the only hope to wake cousin Zhong up!'

As the others slowly were given their share, Ye Wei sat down in a lotus position and sent will-force to his hands to open the repository.

'Medium-grade mystic arm! Medium-grade scrolls!' Ye Wei could feel the Qi disturbance clearly the moment he put his hand in the alternative dimension, and he quickly identified the items within.

'Three medium-grade mystic arms! Thirty six medium-grade scrolls!' Ye

Wei was shocked. It seemed like there were more treasures in his repository than the other three combined...

Hong Xun, Xue Yao, and the rest were sharing a few hundred pieces from all three repositories, but there were no signs of medium-grade mystic arms, nor was there medium-grade scrolls. There were no Myst stances, and no Myst formula manuscripts, but all of these things were present in Ye Wei's repository!

The relative dimension in Ye Wei's was much more spacious than all of the other three put together!

'Let's do a recount... three medium-grade mystic arms, thirty six medium-grade scrolls, three hundred low-grade mystic arms, one thousand two hundred low-grade scrolls, three hundred Spirit formulas, more than three thousand kinds of pills, and eighteen kinds of herbs and it is there!'

"There are more than five thousand items here!" Ye Wei whispered. His heart was beating rapidly, and his face was flustered. His hand that held the repository was shaking from excitement! 'Cousin Zhong! I've finally found it!'

Chapter 83: Secret Realm

Ye Wei could not estimate the value of his treasures. There were now more items in his repository than in some City Lords' vaults!

With this many resources, the Ye family will easily become the strongest family in Green Moon City! Apart from the City Lord, Master Yi, and South Star Academy, nobody would be able to challenge their position.

Even if the other two Runemaster of Green Moon City wanted to make a move on the Ye family, they would have to join force to do so.

Most importantly there was Welkin Leaves in the repository with which Ye Zhong could be woken up. Due to this Ye Wei could not help but to be extremely emotional.

If Ye Wei didn't have astounding self-control, he would have screamed out of excitement. You should never put your wealth on display; Ye Wei understood that very well. The amount of treasures in this repository was shockingly enormous, and if anyone was to learn of it before a large secure vault had been built then the Ye family would be in a crisis.

Although everyone took an oath words can spread, and that's why Ye Wei would not let anybody know just how much treasure was in the repository he took.

As Ye Wei looked around, he saw Hong Xun and Xue Yao still distributing the goods. Sharing hundreds of treasures between hundreds of people was an extremely troublesome task.

First, they had to estimate how much was each piece worth. Then they had to rank every person in the group based on cultivation level and strength. 'The stronger one was, the more valuable treasure one could acquire' was the principle they went by, and it was very difficult to be completely fair and just. This made Hong Xun and Xue Yao's job very hard.

'There were two passageways that led into the depths of this labyrinth.

Zi Yan, Jin Yan, and Mo Ya went through the other one. If I am correct, these two passageways should ultimately lead to the same place!’

‘Jin Yan and Mo Ya were really strong by the looks of it; I wonder if Zi Yan will be fine following them...’ Ye Wei clenched his fist worrying for Lin Zi Yan’s safety.

‘My cultivation advanced to the seven-star level now, but compared to Jin Yan and Mo Ya I am still weak! Most likely I will not be able to help Zi Yan, and I will probably only be a burden if I get involved. However... with all the treasure... Even if I have to face them, I should be able to hold my own!’ Ye Wei thought about what he could do with the thirty six medium-grade scrolls, and his lips curled up into a confident smile.

‘I’m sure they will distribute the items fairly. It is a tedious and time-consuming task, I can’t just sit here and wait. I have to find Zi Yan and make sure she is safe!’ Ye Wei glanced at the busy crowd and slowly stood up.

“Everyone, take your time and please share the treasures fairly. I can’t stay because there is something I must do deeper in the labyrinth!” Ye Wei waved at them and said.

“Sure, little bro! Stay safe!”

“Take care of yourself!”

Hong Xun, Xue Yao, and the other cultivators nodded at Ye Wei bidding farewell.

Although Ye Wei was just a Student nobody was really worried about him. Not taking into account the repository he just got, everyone knew he had medium-grade scrolls with him, and therefore nobody could do much harm to him.

Lu Chao had also gone deeper into the labyrinth, but after the standoff earlier it became apparent that he was not a threat to Ye Wei.

“Farewell!”

Ye Wei nodded back and waved again. He then turned around and

followed the crystal passageway that continued at the back of the chamber. The crystal passageway seemed endless. The large jade crystal wall was only a gate through which the wide tunnel continued onward.

“Run!” Although Ye Wei’s cultivation was at just the seven-star Student level, his Sentient was as large as a Warrior’s and his dantian was as spacious as a nine-star Student’s.

While running, Ye Wei transferred everything in the repository into his interspatial bag and the spatial runes slowly disappeared after it had been emptied.

Although, when compared to a Warrior with speed boosted stances, Ye Wei’s normal speed was still considered slow, but at his full speed he wouldn’t be looked down upon by any Warrior. After four hours of running nine dots of purple light appeared on the edge of the vanishing point in the passageway. As Ye Wei got closer, he discovered that they were nine huge amethyst pillars that were engraved with mystic runes.

“Amethyst pillars?”

“Eh?” Ye Wei came to a stop and took a look at the massive purple crystal pillars. He couldn’t feel any runic repositories within pillars, and the Qi disturbance that spatial runes usually gave off was absent.

Surrounded by the nine pillars of purple light stood an ancient octangular bluestone platform. Carved into its surface was a sequence of complicated runes which formed the part of a bigger mysterious pattern.

“These runes are incredibly complex.” Ye Wei mumbled as his eyes scanned the amethyst pillars. He couldn’t take his eyes off the runes...

‘ I don’t understand any of them!’

Ye Wei’s soul sensitivity was stronger than ordinary Runemasters, and his Sentient was spiritually linked to the Mystic Mount. Every time he saw unfamiliar runes, his Sentient provided him with related knowledge and helped him understand its energy flow, but this time, there was nothing.

Ye Wei understood nothing about these runes!

He couldn't help but wonder, 'Who is the creator of this labyrinth? He has to be unimaginably powerful!'

'This is strange. Where did Lu Chao go?' Ye Wei scanned the area and saw no signs of anyone; he frowned in confusion.

Ye Wei was sure Lu Chao entered this very path, and now that he had reached the end of the passageway there was nowhere to hide.

'Could it be...'

A thought came to Ye Wei's mind causing his eyes to widen, and he cast them onto the bluestone platform.

'Can these runes on this bluestone platform be the legendary dimensional runes? If so these pillars together with the platform could be a teleportation device!' Ye Wei was utterly shocked by the idea.

Dimensional runes are something only Grand Runemasters are able to create and manipulate. Even Master Yi, the most powerful man in Green Moon City, was only a ten-star Runemaster. Grand Runemasters are a rare group of Runemasters, very few would dare to ever offend them, even noblemen would have to bow their heads to them!

'This is outrageous. It must be a runic teleportation array! The person who built this is at the very least a returned prime Warrior, possibly even a god's prime Warrior!'

Ye Wei's eyes couldn't blink, and his mouth went dry. It was hard for him to imagine someone with this kind of power, and that now he was standing in a place left behind by such a person.

Ye Wei was familiar with the concept of teleportation. Everyone who lived in the Zhou dynasty knew of it. It had been almost a millennium since the Zhou dynasty was established. During this period of time, the governing body dedicated vast sums of money and human resources to build a runic teleportation array in every major city within the sovereignty's borders.

Cities like Green Moon City and Frozen Sun City were just minor cities. They were nothing in comparison to major Ning City, and at its heart

there was a teleport array that was directly linked to the imperial capital.

Because of such a system, the forces of the dynasty were able to be dispatched to anywhere within the borders quickly and effectively, and that is the main reason why demons and wild beasts had been purged and kept out of the dynasty's borders and also how they kept the peace.

Ye Wei was pretty certain he was looking at such a device, hidden in the depths of the Bloodmist Labyrinth. As such it was no surprise that he was deeply shocked.

'It's easy to verify; I can just try it!' Ye Wei couldn't believe he was looking at something so extraordinary. He couldn't feel any evil aura around the device; therefore, he was wondering if he should leap into the unknown.

'Could this really be a teleport? But it takes so much money and manpower to build just one. If it truly is, I assume this labyrinth is a private facility because it's not on any official map... How could someone build this without everyone knowing about it! But if this is not a teleport array then where could Lu Chao be?'

With suspicion, Ye Wei started to move his feet, and the moment he placed his foot onto the bluestone platform, something unusual happened.

"Warp! Warp!"

The nine amethyst pillars and the platform shone a deep purple hue. The complex runes started to oscillate, and the runic pattern started to spin rapidly.

When the spinning pattern reached its maximum speed, it became blurry and a large octangular pillar of light appeared on the platform.

Ye Wei was standing in the middle of the platform as he felt a little dizzy. Suddenly, he lost his vision, and he couldn't see or sense anything as he was consumed by endless darkness. He was swallowed by nothingness, by this tiny yet large portion of the space-time continuum.

After that, he felt as if his body turned weightless, lighter than a

feather. He felt as if he was still, but somehow, at the same time, traveling an infinite distance at an astonishing speed.

Ye Wei couldn't feel time nor could he sense his own body. The next thing he knew he was conscious again, and when he opened his eyes, he was on top of a small piece of dry land in the middle of a swamp.

The water in the swamp was black and bubbling, and there was a lingering, sickening odor. Ye Wei looked up to try and figure out where he was, but he saw that the swamp was completely surrounded by mountains. He could see that within the mountains grew many strange looking trees, and he could hear the occasional shrill chirping sound coming from the woods enveloping him. The place he found himself in was very strange, as if it was another world, or more accurately, a secret realm. A thought came to Ye Wei's mind causing his eyes to widen and he cast them onto the bluestone platform.

Chapter 84: Scrolls

Although there was a lingering odor in the air, the breeze brought over clouds of white mist. A mist filled with refreshing primal energy. This contrast confused Ye Wei, and he really couldn't tell whether or not he disliked this strange environment.

As Ye Wei was cautiously scanning his surroundings, something growing on top of a jet black rock caught his attention, "Black cloud shaped leaves with a green stem!" He said to himself as he saw its black leaves gently flowing in the breeze.

"There is no mistake; this herb is a Black Billow!" Ye Wei's eyes widened, and there was an undisguised excitement on his face, 'This is an exquisite quenching herb and it's a key ingredient of the Fiery Sun Quencher pills!"

Ye Wei raised his head and looked further. He saw that there were more Black Billows growing in the swamp!

Ye Wei had never imagined he would be lucky enough to see such a rarity in plain sight out in the world, but it seemed this was the case in this realm. He scanned around and spotted eight black billows. Who knew how many more there were shrouded by the mist.

"High-grade herbs are everywhere. What kind of place is this?!" Ye Wei exclaimed. He did not hesitate to run around and put all the herbs he saw in his bag.

'What is this stone monument?' As Ye Wei collected the last black billow he saw, a stone that was hidden behind some thick bush sparked his interest.

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Half of the stone was buried under black mud. Three rusty weapons were scattered around it: a black stick, an ancient sword, and a long scarlet blade.

"Mystic arms!" Ye Wei eyes brightened. Although these weapons

appeared beaten up and rusty, they were shining with an unmistakable green glow, a glow that represented their value.

Medium-grade mystic arms could be bought, but their price reflected their rarity, not how much the material was actually worth. They often fetched prices over millions of silver at auctions.

Ye Wei was overjoyed, he literally just got himself three medium-grade arms from the repository, and now he was looking at three more. His body was trembling from excitement.

“Eh?” Ye Wei took a few quick step towards the weapons, but just as he was about to pull the black stick out of the mud, he noticed there was a little hole next to it and became wary.

“Someone was here before me?” Ye Wei’s face paled. He quickly put his hand into his bag and took out a scroll. While the hole was small, it did not look natural. It was entirely possible that it was left after another small mystic arm was dug up.

‘You have great awareness!’ Not far away on a bushy tree, Lu Chao watched Ye Wei’s every move between the thick branches. He resembled a python stalking its prey, waiting for the right moment to deliver the fatal strike.

‘Ha, you have a few medium-grade scrolls with you, so what? I don’t think Student scum like you can defend yourself against me now that I have these two-star medium-grade mystic arms in hand.’ He thought as he glanced at the three-inch dagger in his palm with a bloodthirsty sneer on his face.

All medium-grade mystic arms contain Myst stances, and they are further graded into a ten-star ranking system according to how strong the stances in them were. Although Lu Chao’s mystic arm was just at the two-star grade, the threat imposed by a Myst stance was not something a normal Student could deal with.

Not long ago when he was digging up the mystic arms next to the stone monument, he felt someone approaching and thought it was an army of cultivators arriving, so he quickly hid somewhere safe and inconspicuous

while taking out his dagger.

Clenching the medium-grade mystic arm tightly, Lu Chao was more confident than he ever had been before. He knew very well that Ye Wei had two medium-grade scrolls in his possession, but he was no longer scared. 'I don't care about your mystic scrolls when I have something better!'

'There were four repositories in total, and three of them were shared between Hong Xun, Xue Yao, and those Warriors, and this boy took a whole one for himself!' Thinking about the large amount of treasures that were possibly in the repository, Lu Chao licked his dry lips while he narrowed his greedy eyes at Ye Wei.

'Hong Xun and the rest did not follow him. Fate is on my side!' Lu Chao chuckled wickedly. Under the impression that Ye Wei might not be alone, he was hesitant to attack immediately. If a few hundred Warriors were to fight him together, even having ten mystic arms with him wouldn't make a difference.

'You know I'm here, and you think you have time to defend yourself and collect mystic arms?!' Lu Chao laughed and said as Ye Wei grabbed the end of the black stick. He took a heavy step on the branch and launched himself towards Ye Wei. Primal wings appeared on his back as he dived down ferociously like a falcon.

'Ha, you can't bear to wait any longer?' Ye Wei intentionally exposed his back to Lu Chao, but never actually let his guard down. While one of his hands was on the black stick, his other hand held the low-grade scroll. He could sense an approaching presence, but he remained calm.

'Now is the time!' There was no way Lu Chao could hide when Ye Wei had such impeccable soul sensitivity, and Ye Wei knew exactly how far Lu Chao's reach was and where he was attacking from. The ambush bore no element of surprise for Ye Wei and because of that, he was able to remain calm. When Lu Chao was just a few meters away, he heard the sound of fabric tearing.

"Buzz!"

This scroll was not one of the ones that were given to him by Lin Zi Yan; it was a low-grade offensive scroll he found in the repository!

The scroll held the forbidden high-level Spirit stance – Triple Sword Sky Splitter.

“Forbidden Spirit stance!” Lu Chao saw the three Qi swords as they penetrated the air at a fearsome velocity. He channeled his Qi to his wings and flew backwards, away from the course of Ye Wei’s Qi swords.

“Whiz!”

One of the Qi swords grazed Lu Chao’s cheek leaving a gash on his otherwise flawless skin.

Lu Chao’s plan was to approach undetected and finish Ye Wei before he could react; he could not believe that not only did his plan fail, but that he was so close to being gravely injured by a counter attack to his head.

Forbidden high-level Spirit stances posed a threat to even ten-star Warriors! The seven-star Warrior, Lu Chao had no way to defend himself against it, especially when he did not even expect Ye Wei to react at all.

“Damn it!”

Lu Chao narrowly dodged the attack. His face turned ashen, feeling cheated as he thought Ye Wei only had defensive scrolls on him.

“Ha, dodge this!” Ye Wei looked at the Lu Chao’s clumsy figure knowing that Lu Chao barely got away from the first wave of Qi swords. Ye Wei channeled his Qi to speed up the swords and then swung them towards Lu Chao again.

“Zoom!”

The Qi swords accelerated, and despite Lu Chao’s efforts, he only dodged two of the three swords. The last one flew straight to his face.

Lu Chao’s pupil dilated as he looked at the approaching Qi sword. The veins on his face bulged as he filled his body with Qi. He managed to move his head just an inch to the left a second before the sword connected.

“I will kill you!”

The sharp edge of the sword left a shockingly long wound on Lu Chao's neck. Blood was gushing out as he was overwhelmed by pain. His facial expression turned from surprised to hateful. He stared at Ye Wei with the intention to kill him, and then aggressively injected his Qi into the dagger in his hand.

“Die!”

Lu Chao's Qi activated the stance within his two-star medium-grade mystic arm. The three-inch dagger immediately shone bright, and a small hurricane of Qi started brewing around it.

The Qi dagger flew towards Ye Wei in a flash. They were quick, hardly visible, and wrapped with dangerous Qi. They flew very low over the ground, so low that all the grass, mud, and rubble under its path were flung up into the air.

The three-inch dagger was advancing on Ye Wei like a bloodthirsty predator.

This was bad for Ye Wei. He expected Lu Chao's ambush, but he did not anticipate that he would have a medium-grade mystic arm. His pupils dilated as he figured out why, ‘The shape of this dagger matches the hole by the stone monument!’

“Cut!” Ye Wei redirected the three Qi swords to Lu Chao's dagger, and at the same time, he took another scroll out of his bag.

“Bang! Bang!”

The Qi sword was rendered into loose strands of energy and vanished before it could get close to the dagger as it was dissipated by the hurricane of Qi around it. Unmoved by the Qi sword, the dagger kept approaching Ye Wei with unstoppable momentum.

“Just a Spirit stance, there is no way you can guard my Myst stance with that sh*t! Say goodbye to your pathetic life!” Behind the hurricane, Lu Chao was recklessly laughing. He could already see Ye Wei's head falling from his body sliced by his vicious attack.

“Forbidden high-level Spirit stance – Cyan Windguard!” Ye Wei slowly exhaled as he refocused his mind back to a calm state and tore one of his scrolls.

‘It’s just a medium-grade mystic arm; I have plenty of scrolls to deal with it; no need to panic.’

“Zoom! Zoom!”

More than a hundred glittering runes appeared and spread out forming a screen which then transformed into a curved green wind wall in front of Ye Wei.

“Bang!”

Moments after the wind wall appeared, it was struck by the dagger together with the Qi hurricane, mud, and rubble. The wind wall shook vigorously as every point of impact rippled; it was starting to show signs of fracturing.

“Scrolls? Ha, I would like to see how many scrolls you have!” Lu Chao was levitating and watching Ye Wei from midair with an evil grin on his face.

“Crack! Crack!”

Under the pressure of the Qi hurricane, the green wind wall was started to crack and bend. A spider web like fracture started to appear and grow on Ye Wei’s defensive stance.

“Scrolls? I have plenty of them!” Standing behind the wind wall, Ye Wei put his hand into his bag and calmly took out another scroll.

After a loud bang, the wind wall shattered, but at the same moment, Ye Wei tore the second scroll releasing another forbidden Spirit stance.

A Qi screen with a metallic glow appeared where the wind wall just dissipated!

Low-grade scrolls were much cheaper than medium-grade ones as they were pretty much mass produced. The supply of low-grade scrolls never ran low. If a person had enough money, he would never run out of them,

and because of that, Ye Wei was more than willing to use those scrolls. He would much rather spend more time using them before actually deciding to use a medium-grade scroll as the latter were rare to come by.

“Boom!”

The dagger and the Qi hurricane broke through Ye Wei’s defense again and again. Ye Wei took a few steps back and tore one scroll after another activating shield after shield in front of him.

Although the dagger was breaking the shields consistently, it was also weakened by a fraction every time it broke through a defensive stance.

The Myst stance was impressive, but it just couldn’t connect to Ye Wei because he was protected by so many defensive stances. By this time Ye Wei had torn the eighth scroll calmly, the Qi hurricane around the dagger died down, and Lu Chao was completely shocked.

“How... How many scrolls do you have!?” Lu Chao could feel and see how the dagger was getting weaker and weaker as he shouted at Ye Wei.

Ye Wei had already torn eight scrolls, and he was calm as usual. One of his hands was in his bag ready to take out another scroll if needed.

“You want to know how many scrolls I have? Just keep wasting your Qi on activating the stance in your dagger, I am as curious about how long your dantian will last if you keep pumping Qi into your cute little toy!” Ye Wei said while staring at Lu Chao with a cold glare.

Chapter 85: Primate

Ye Wei was still young. He didn't have the aggression nor the will to kill a person, but Lu Chao had provoked him again and again, challenging his values over and over. Ye Wei had finally run out of patience. This time he was angry! He was thinking about killing Lu Chao and putting an end to all the troubles created by this greedy, loathsome seven-star Warrior.

Lu Chao started to doubt himself as the smile on Ye Wei's face grew bigger. He had almost drained his dantian from activating the stance just now, and he knew that he wouldn't be able to use it again.

This Myst stance was his first and last attack he could use against Ye Wei who didn't seem to be worried about running out of scrolls any time soon. Lu Chao would definitely be defeated if the situation did not change.

"Hey kid, this misunderstanding between us is stupid! I will give up those three mystic arms, so what do you say, truce?" Lu Chao rolled his eyes while pointing at the weapons next to the stone monument as he made the dagger fly back to his hand.

Ye Wei glanced at Lu Chao's eyes, and he could see fear and trickery in them. "Yea I can stop, but you have to drop that mystic arm of yours on the ground before you leave!"

"Don't push your luck kid! You are just a Student. I am a seven-star Warrior! My family, the Lu's, are one of the four biggest families in Frozen Sun City! We even have a condensed prime Warrior waiting outside the labyrinth right now for me as we speak! You will regret not respecting your seniors!"

"I am willing to give up three medium-grade mystic arms, what the hell are you thinking? Can't you just appreciate a good offer when you see it?" Lu Chao glanced at the mystic arms by the stone monument, his aggression could be seen in his bloodshot eyes.

"Looks like you really don't have much Qi left in your dantian after activating that stance, do you think I don't know you're just trying to buy

time?” Ye Wei looked at Lu Chao calmly and took a step towards him while taking out another scroll.

This was not a defensive low-grade scroll, it was a scroll that contained an offensive forbidden high-level Spirit stance!

“The world will be a better place without a manipulative, selfish person like you!” Ye Wei tore the scroll as he spoke.

“Zoom!”

Immediately, hundreds of ice cicadas rushed out of the torn scroll. The temperature dropped sharply as the swarm flapped their wings, stirring up waves of icy whirlwind.

“Kill!”

Ye Wei’s mind was made up so he directed all the cicadas to where Lu Chao stood.

“Forbidden high-level Spirit stance – Ice Cicada Dance!” It was literally a chilling sight. Lu Chao’s face drain of color, and the blood around his wound started to crystalize. His joints felt stiff along with his eyebrows and hair starting to freeze before the cicadas were even close to him.

“You forced me to do this! If I am going to die, you are coming with me!” Lu Chao clenched his fist. There was a hint of madness on his angry face as he squeezed the last bit of Qi out of his dantian, then he launched himself towards the black rod behind Ye Wei.

Lu Chao did not attempt to dodge the cicadas; instead, he dove straight into the swarm. Ye Wei was suspicious about Lu Chao’s intentions therefore he took a defensive scroll out of his bag just in case things went south.

‘If he comes even remotely close to me, I will use this scroll and will be safe behind a shield.’

However, Lu Chao did not try to attack as Ye Wei expected, but instead, went towards the mystic arm next to the stone monument.

An ice cicada exploded on Lu Chao’s body and shards of frozen Qi

penetrated his skin.

The intense impact made Lu Chao vomit blood.

Ye Wei slightly frowned in confusion. Because of Lu Chao's actions he clenched his scroll tightly while gazing upon Lu Chao. 'You have no Qi left! What are you going to do with the rod?'

"You want to kill me, I will not make it easy for you! We can be buddies in hell!"

Lu Chao placed both his hands on the black rod and wrapped them around it tightly. Then he pulled it out with all of his strength.

The moment the rod was pulled out, a jet of black flame shot out from the hole in the mud, torching the grass and trees around it.

"Crack! Crack!"

The ice cicadas that were flying towards Lu Chao melted and evaporated when they flew close to the black flame!

It seemed Lu Chao knew the black flame would be there to save him, and for some reason, he threw the black rod towards Ye Wei right after he pulled it out. At the same time, Lu Chao tore a scroll and was carried out of the area engulfed by the black flame by the air current his scroll created.

"Hahaha! Enjoy dancing in the fire ..." Every piece of clothing on Lu Chao's body was soaked in sweat but it was quickly dried by the heat around him. If he was any slower he would have been torched.

"Roar!"

Before Lu Chao could finish his sentence, a deafening roar sounded from within the black fire. Behind the burning runes, a ten-meter tall giant silverback ape that was covered in thick black hair emerged.

Strands of black flame were circling around the ape but the heat did not seem to bother it in the slightest. From a distance the ape looked almost demonic, like it was climbing out of hellfire.

"Admiral level beast, Ragefire Ape!" Ye Wei stared at the spectral beast

that was walking out of the black flame as he started to worry for his life. His shaking hand clenched tightly onto the scroll.

Admiral level beasts' strength are comparable to condensed prime Warriors!

"Boy, this ape is no weaker than a two-star condensed prime Warrior. Even with your medium-grade scrolls you won't be able to handle his powerful strikes. You won't be able to get away from him even if you had wings!" Lu Chao was stepping on the air current mid-air while looking down on Ye Wei and laughing hysterically.

Lu Chao learned it the hard way. Out of the four mystic arms that were buried next to the stone monument, the dagger was the weakest. But even so, it took Lu Chao two low-grade scrolls and a long struggle before he finally beat the spectral beast that was guarding the dagger.

The three-inch dagger was a two-star medium-grade mystic arm while the black rod was three-star medium-grade. Lu Chao felt that the scarlet blade and the meter long ancient sword were even more powerful, possibly at the three star level or above. He was not ready to fight their guardian beasts yet.

Three-star medium-grade mystic arms are a different kind of rarity. Jin Yan and Mo Ya were born with a silver spoon in their mouths. Both of them were the strongest youngsters in their families and even they had to earn their three-star medium-grade mystic arms from the family vault by passing a series of tough tests.

The three medium-grade mystic arms Ye Wei acquired from the repository were only one-star level weapons, rare but not comparable to these four.

Although Lu Chao got out of its way as quick as he could, he was still struck by the Ragefire Ape's Qi. Now that he was a safe distance away, he rubbed his stomach as he looked forward to seeing Ye Wei suffer and eventually die from the raging beast. 'Humm... I wonder how many medium-grade scrolls he has left. Let's hope he dies right after finishing off the beast!'

‘That way I will be able to take the treasures he has acquired and the black rod!’ Lu Chao licked his lips anticipating the moment when he could jump in and become the sole benefactor.

This Ragefire Ape weighed more than a ton, and with each step it took the ground trembled.

‘The stone giant’s presence was nothing comparing to this ape’s... I don’t think the low-grade scrolls would do anything to block him, do I really have to use my medium-grade scrolls?’ Ye Wei was feeling the pressure and the overwhelming heat causing his sweaty face to look concerned.

Lin Zi Yan gave two defensive medium-grade scrolls to Ye Wei, together with the thirty-six scrolls he got from the repository, he had thirty-eight. Ye Wei was positive they were sufficient to defeat the ape, but he would still like to preserve as much resources as he could before meeting back up with Lin Zi Yan.

Ye Wei did not have enough Qi to use any mystic arms in his possession yet, otherwise he’d be more relaxed right now. Without mystic arms in his arsenal, the scrolls were his only option regardless of how much he wanted to preserve them.

Looking at the ape and the mesmerising flame around it, Ye Wei ground his teeth and put the low-grade scroll back into his bag. He then took out another scroll, one that glowed green.

“Lu Chao, do you really think this ape can save your life?” Ye Wei fearlessly glared at Lu Chao who was levitating behind the Ragefire Ape. He was determined and ready to tear the scroll at any moment.

“Huh...”

Just when Ye Wei opened the scroll, the iron talisman hung on his belt started vibrating.

Chapter 86: Frozen in Time

Tides of black flame were rushing out of the rod, heating up everything around and distorting the air. In just a moment Ye Wei was completely swallowed by the fire wave.

“Are you actually hesitant to use medium-grade scroll this time, Ye Wei? Do you want to get yourself killed?” Lu Chao asked as he watched the flame consume his enemy while laughing with disdain.

‘I assumed this kid would at least use one scroll and hopefully die together with the Ape. Will I really have to deal with it myself?’ The thought crossed Lu Chao’s mind as he realized how powerful and terrifying the black flames were. Not to mention Ye Wei was merely a student. Even ten-star Warriors, like Jin Yan and Mo Ya, wouldn’t be able to defeat it.

The Ragefire Ape did not obey his commands, so if Ye Wei fell now, Lu Chao would be the next target of the black flames.

Suddenly, the flames around Ye Wei started to slowly vanish. There he stood in the center of the charred earth completely intact and staring coldly at Lu Chao.

‘Unharmed? How is that possible?! I didn’t see him using any of his medium-grade scrolls at all!’ An Incredulous look passed over his face. It wasn’t possible for Ye Wei to survive this conflagration of black flames; however, what he saw was that not a single hair on his head was burnt.

The moment the black flame surrounded Ye Wei, he felt a tremendous amount of Qi coming from the iron talisman. The power that came from the it enveloped him in a giant cocoon made of dark and light rays of Qi protecting him thoroughly from the engulfing flames.

The black silken cocoon completely blocked Ye Wei from the fire, and to his surprise, he didn’t even feel the heat of the flame that was only a few inches away.

‘This iron talisman definitely contains an astonishing amount of

energy!' He thought bewildered. As he looked back at the raging black flame, he felt a mighty force surging from the talisman.

'It didn't just suppress the energy from the stone puppets, but it is also repelling the Ragefire Ape's black flames!'

Ye Wei studied the iron talisman cautiously. It looked very ordinary, and nothing in its appearance stood out, unlike the beauty and shine of mystic arms. However, if it were just a decorative talisman, it could never hinder the giant's or the ape's monstrous power.

'What is this talisman after all?' Ye Wei thought as he stared at the talisman in front of him, his eyes were glittering with curiosity.

"Hong! Hong!"

The Ragefire Ape's muffled voice came from the other side of the cocoon. He clenched his fist and pounded his chest threatening and challenging everyone around. His eyes burned with an intense black flame as he trod towards Ye Wei, bringing along a sweltering heat wave.

Ye Wei's whole body tightened. His hand firmly grasped the medium-grade scroll looking for the opportunity to defend himself. He was calling on his soul sensitivity to try and anticipate the Ragefire Ape's attack. There would be no hesitation from him when using the scroll if the ape came any closer.

A buzzing noise sounded as the huge wave of black flame rushed towards the silken cocoon.

This time, the iron talisman that was circling Ye Wei's body started to shake. Its movement became erratic as it continuously flew up and down.

All eighty-one grooves on the iron talisman were shining brightly. After engulfing the energy from the blood devourer crystals on the field, eighty grooves were completely filled, and the last groove was half full.

Now that the talisman absorbed the Qi within the black flame, the eighty-first groove was about to be filled up. Judging by the speed the talisman was absorbing the flame's energy, the iron talisman would be fully charged within three breaths!

‘The talisman can actually absorb the Ape’s power too? That’s absurd!’

Ye Wei could feel the talisman’s power increasing exponentially as it consumed the ape’s energy.

“Hong!” The Ragefire Ape roared as he leaped out from the black flames. His bloodshot eyes were gazing aggressively at Ye Wei, who was terrified by the enormous figure advancing upon him looking as big as a mountain.

“Hmph!”

Ye Wei took a step back with his eyes fixed on the ape. While he was watching the ape’s raised arm coming in his direction, his grip tightened around the medium-grade scroll. There was no trace of fear on his face.

Just a second before ape’s fist landed, Ye Wei narrowed his eyes and tore the medium-grade scroll.

“Myst stance – Scarlet Gold-Plated Armor!”

Hundreds of glowing golden grains emerged from the torn scroll which covered his body in a golden layer of armor from head to toe in mere seconds. The armor was glowing from afar, showing off its dazzling luster.

The ape’s fists drove through the black silken cocoon formed by the iron talisman crushing vigorously onto the golden armor. It created a deafening noise and bursts of thousands of bright sparks.

The violent shock wave from the strike headed directly at Ye Wei and also impacted everything within a ten meters radius helping to suppress the flames.

The shockwave suppressed the sea of black flames. It expelled every bit of fire creating a large dead zone with the ape and Ye Wei in the center.

“Too strong to resist...” Ye Wei grunted as the sweet taste of blood filled his mouth. A strand of eye-catching red appeared on the corner of his lips.

‘The golden armor is intact but, he still can hurt me.’ Ye Wei looked at

the Ragefire Ape's black eyes. 'I cannot resist the shock wave and the heat any longer.'

Ye Wei didn't think the ape could be so terrifyingly strong. 'The medium-grade scroll I just used contained a defensive Myst stance, and even that could not take a mere physical hit from the ape. The mystic arm he's guarding must be something incredible...'

The figure of the Ragefire Ape filled the space blocking the sky from Ye Wei's sight. He growled and the next moment he raised his gigantic fiery black fist again, ready to smash it onto Ye Wei's body. Falling from above the ape's fist had the outrageous momentum of a meteorite.

"You are just the ghost of a real beast! I have more medium-grade scrolls with me. It's only a matter of time before you will be on your knees!" Ye Wei wiped the blood from his mouth as a flash of determination appeared in his eyes. He walked forward and injected his Qi into the scarlet armor. With his arms crossed above his head, he continued to defend himself against the rain of the ape's fists.

Although the Ragefire Ape's punches did hurt Ye Wei, it was in no sense a heavy injury. In hopes that the armor could take a few more hits, Ye Wei was in no hurry to use another medium-grade scroll.

With every punch, the spectral ape was draining the very energy he was made of. Ye Wei only had to defend himself, and soon the ape would run out of energy and dissipate.

"Bang!"

Suddenly, one of the ape's punches landed on Ye Wei's arm. The tremendous force behind the punch caused Ye Wei to sink deep into the ground. The earth Ye Wei stood on started cracking in a spider web motion, fractured around him and away spreading all over the ground.

"He is too strong!" Ye Wei's mouth was full of blood again. His scarlet golden armor had finally broken, and small chinks appeared here and there.

The Ragefire Ape was certainly a terrifying beast. Although it was only

a ghost created by runes, it's strength could match a condensed prime Warrior. The scroll Ye Wei used was only giving him fractions of a low-level Myst stance. It was actually pretty lucky he could neutralize multiple punches with just one scroll.

If the Ragefire Ape were to throw another punch, the armor would surely shatter.

'How many medium-grade scroll do I need to use before this ape runs out of energy?!' Ye Wei had his hand in his bag again, ready to pull out another one.

"Hong!" The ape growled then swung his fists towards Ye Wei once more. He was a spectral beast that did not understand the concept of pain and exhaustion.

'He won't stop until the energy runs out it seems...'

Ye Wei stared at the fists flying in his direction. His heart ached as he unrolled yet another scroll to open. Just before he had a chance to tear it, the iron talisman came to life bursting forth a blinding silver light around his body.

All eighty-one grooves of the talisman were filled as it swallowed down the last spark of black flame. As the burst of silver light expanded, everything the light shone onto froze in place including the ape's fists that were now hanging mid-air.

An invisible forcefield with the talisman in its center suddenly covered a hundred meter wide hemisphere. This enveloped both Ye Wei and the ape, and even the black flames that were still weakly flickering in the distance.

Chapter 87: Woods

“What’s going on?” Ye Wei’s body only froze for a brief moment, but it would be a moment that he would never forget.

When the iron talisman shone the silver light and created a forcefield, Ye Wei felt as if he was stuck in a sea of quicksand. Even simple actions like wiggling his fingers became an impossible task.

He looked at the levitating talisman, and a picture was slowly coming together.

“The silver light created by the iron talisman had a mysterious way to cover the area around it in an invisible force field!” Ye Wei looked shocked. There was no doubt now how precious this simple iron amulet was.

The spectral ape which was as strong as a condensed prime Warrior was immobilized by the force field. Just from this one could tell how valuable this piece of metal was.

Shortly after the force field was created by the talisman, Ye Wei realized he could now slowly move his hands and legs even though the ape remained completely motionless.

“Phew!” Ye Wei’s excitement subsided, and he then switched his focus to the Ragefire Ape in front of him.

“What happened?!” Lu Chao was shocked by the scene. Even though the whole time he was a bit far away to be able to see everything in detail, he knew what had caused this force field, ‘Ye Wei’s talisman was able to handle the black flame and it can hold the ape still?’

‘Legends say that there are few people who could survive the rage of a Ragefire Ape and those who meet one perish!’ Lu Chao remembered what he had been told as he glanced at the old bones scattered around the stone monument. He felt disappointed and upset for not having the same sort of the defensive medium-grade scroll that Ye Wei used previously to block Lu Chao’s dagger before fighting the ape. He definitely could use

something like that right now to protect his body from the heat of the flames and then he could retrieve the mystic arms.

‘There is no way to find out how long this force field is going to last. I have to finish off this ape while I can!’ Ye Wei put the defensive scroll back into his bag and took out an offensive medium-grade scroll.

‘The strength of the Ragefire Ape could be compared to the condensed prime Warrior, and even a forbidden Spirit stance from these low-grade scrolls wouldn’t leave a scratch on him!’

Without hesitation Ye Wei unrolled the offensive scroll and with a sound of tearing fabric, the scroll was ripped.

“Zoom!”

Several hundred fluorescent runes appeared above the sea of black flames, shining like stars in the dark night sky. Instantly, they transformed into a turquoise spectral bow “Low-level Myst stance – Arrowstorm!”

Ye Wei could feel the raw power of the stance inscribed in the scroll by its master. Even though the power was not his own, he was still able to control it.

“Kill!” Ye Wei said while staring coldly at the spectral Ragefire Ape. The moment he thought about attacking the beast, the turquoise bow’s bowstring vibrated violently.

“Woosh! Woosh! Woosh!”

Round after round, hundreds of arrows flew in the black ape’s direction like a shower of rain pouring down over him. They easily penetrated the spectral beast leaving a ton of black holes where the arrows went through.

In the end, this ape in front of Ye Wei was only a ghost summoned to protect these weapons. Its defensive abilities were lackluster compared to the real thing.

Suppressed by the talisman, the Ragefire Ape was still not able to move

an inch. It was not able to defend itself against this Myst stance. Moments after the arrows connected to the target, the semi-transparent body started to rapidly fade.

As the ape started to fade, the black flame also began to disappear. Both the ape and the flame were made from Qi, and the moment Ye Wei broke the stance, the beast and the fire were destined to disperse.

“Three-star medium-grade mystic arm!” After the black flame disappeared, Ye Wei slowly walked towards the black rod Lu Chao threw at him. He extended his arm and grabbed the rod.

Holding the black rod, Ye Wei’s eyes widened. There was undisguised shock and excitement on his childish face.

Of course, Ye Wei knew that the rod was a mystic arm, but he could never imagine that it was actually a three-star medium-grade mystic arm!

He had already gotten medium-grade mystic arms earlier from the repository, but they were just one-star mystic arms; they were nothing compared to the black rod!.

A three-star medium-grade mystic arm was worth more than three one-star medium-grade arms combined, and its power too was more than the three lesser quality medium-grade arms put together. There was an immense sense of excitement in Ye Wei’s heart. He was very much aware of the value of what he was holding.

One-star medium-grade mystic arms stored simple low-level Myst stances, while three-star medium-grade mystic arms stored advanced low-level Myst stances. Some of the better quality three-star medium-grade mystic arms could even store peak low-level Myst stances!

Simple level Myst stances are a whole level less powerful than advanced level Myst stances!

This three-star medium-grade mystic arm in Ye Wei’s hand was unmistakably a high quality mystic arm, and the stance within – Ragefire Ape was a peak low-level Myst stance!

Mystic arms can be activated as long as the user’s Qi lasts, unlike

mystic scrolls which are one-time use.

‘No wonder why the Ragefire Ape was so strong!’ Ye Wei finally understood why the scroll he tore could hardly withstand the ape’s fists.

“Lu Chao, this date will be engraved on your tomb; I will not let you go!” Ye Wei realized Lu Chao threw the rod at him so the ape would fight him. He was angered by Lu’s cowardly actions. Ye Wei’s face was turning pale as he was walking on the last of the fading flame towards where Lu Chao was.

Seeing that Ye Wei defeated the black ape, Lu Chao was both shocked and angry. He didn’t expect Ye Wei to have so many trump cards up his sleeves. Looking at Ye Wei slowly collecting the three mystic arms and putting them in his bag, Lu Chao’s heart was quickly overflowing with jealous.

Lu Chao stood on a bluestone, observing the mesmerizing fading flames from a distance. The fresh wound on his face made him look that much more aggressive.

“You must have sustained some injuries! I refuse to believe you are completely fine after all those crushing blows from the ape, and everything else I have used against you!” Lu Chao could not stop thinking about how Ye Wei was bleeding out of his mouth. He desperately wanted revenge.

Lu Chao stepped heavily on the bluestone and launched himself towards the stone monument. His target was the two remaining mystic arms buried in the ground.

“What? You want more? Do you have a death wish?” The fire of anger in Ye Wei’s eyes was now burning brighter than the fading black flames, seeing that Lu Chao was aggressively leaping in his direction. Ye Wei couldn’t help himself from taking action.

In the end, Lu Chao was a seven-star Warrior; he was stronger than Ye Wei in every possible way, and if Lu Chao wanted to escape, Ye Wei would need to use another scroll to catch up. But greed was one of Lu Chao’s dominant traits, ‘If I run now, this kid will have two more mystic

arms in his pockets! Hasn't he taken enough from me already?' Lu Chao's mind was filled with envy. If there were a chance to deny Ye Wei from getting his hands on more treasures, he would not miss it.

Lu Chao and Ye Wei were on the course to collide with each other.

When the distance between Ye Wei and Lu Chao had reduced to merely ten meters, the black flame completely vanished. Lu Chao channeled all his Qi into the three-inch dagger he clenched firmly onto. It once again created a Qi hurricane which Lu Chao directed towards Ye Wei. He was trying to keep Ye Wei busy as he went for the mystic arms.

"Do you think I will give you a second chance?" Ye Wei asked as he tore a medium-grade scroll.

Because Lu Chao was a seven-star Warrior despite him wasting quite a bit of Qi fighting Ye Wei, he took the chance to recover his strength while Ye Wei was fighting the Ragefire Ape. With that bit of Qi he recovered, he activated the stance within his dagger again.

"Myst stance – Green Breeze Blade!" There was a cold glint in Ye Wei's eyes as he attacked the approaching Lu Chao.

The fearsome Myst stance dug a groove into the ground while flying low and closing in on its target.

The wind blade smashed onto the three-inch dagger knocking it off its course then continued to fly at Lu Chao.

'It's within arm's reach!' Lu Chao thought as he extended his arm towards the scarlet blade. When his fingertips touched the rough cold hilt of the weapon the wind blade of Ye Wei's got uncomfortably close.

'Damn it!' Lu Chao pulled back and activated a defensive Spirit stance for protection. It would be useless to lay his arm onto the weapon if he only had one hand to hold it with.

Ye Wei caught Lu Chao in an awkward position and because of this Lu Chao lost his balance while trying to dodge the wind blade. Ye Wei seized the chance and after a grunt flung the wind blade back towards Lu Chao's body.

It only took a split second for Ye Wei to change the blade's direction and moments after, it connected with Lu Chao torso!

The defensive Spirit stance immediately shattered, and Lu Chao was sent flying while spitting blood out of his mouth.

Ye Wei's wind blade did not land on a weak spot of Lu Chao's body, though if it had, there was no doubt Lu Chao would be in pieces now.

Looking at the heavily injured Lu Chao, Ye Wei was still hesitant while walking towards the weakened foe. Lu Chao was exactly the kind of person who would play dead and strike with a sucker punch when his opponent least expected.

"Please forgive me! Let me live! If you don't kill me, I will give you everything valuable I have on me... And I... I am the strongest youngster of my family. You can probably fetch a hundred thousand, no more like two hundred thousand silver if you return me to them safely!" Lu Chao saw that Ye Wei was unrolling a scroll, so he crawled backwards as he murmured and begged for mercy.

"If you kill me, my family will find you and avenge my death!"

"You really think I will let you live?" Ye Wei said in a cold voice. If he were not cautious while he was dealing with Lu Chao, he would have died because of Lu Chao's vicious schemes. Even if killing was the very last thing Ye Wei would do, when dealing with scumbags like Lu Chao it's better to be safe than sorry. In some situations to end someone's life is the only way to survive.

"Die!" Lu Chao widened his bloodshot eyes. His facial expression was twisted as he squeezed the last of his strength and threw hundreds of black, poisonous needles at Ye Wei.

Ye Wei was prepared for a dirty trick all along, and when he saw the slightest arm movement from Lu Chao he had already leaped to the side and therefore dodged the needles.

Using the window of opportunity while Ye Wei was dodging, Lu Chao stood up and threw himself into the woods next to the swamp.

“Damn!” Just as Ye Wei was about to activate a scroll to catch Lu Chao the loud cry of a beast echoed throughout the woods shaking every leaf in sight.

Ye Wei’s face went pale, and he dismissed the idea of pursuing him. ‘What kind of beast could have a fearsome presence like this...’

Soon after the beast’s roar, a chilling scream was heard from behind the trees; it was unmistakably Lu Chao’s voice. The scream quickly died down, and it was followed by the sound of bones cracking and a beast ripping flesh.

Ye Wei gasped in fear, ‘I think Lu Chao walked into a wild beast’s territory...’

Chapter 88: Eighty-One

As Lu Chao's screams died down, the wild beast's presence eventually faded. It was a mystery to Ye Wei as to why it didn't leave the woods to attack him. He was grateful it didn't, but he was still curious.

Moments after everything returned to its previous calm state. Apart from the sound of leaves rattling in the breeze, there were no detectable movements of any sort. It was only now that Ye Wei finally let his guard down and looked a bit more relaxed, his grip on the scroll slightly loosened.

Although the wild beast did not show itself from its presence, Ye Wei could tell it was no ordinary beast; therefore not only was he relatively relaxed, he was also cautious, glancing often towards the woods.

'Humm, did something happen to the talisman? It feels like a more powerful artifact than it was just moments before. Now it's giving off slightly more energy!' Ye Wei held the iron talisman in his hand and could feel the energy flow within while he looked at the mystic arms buried next to the stone monument.

'The black rod is a three-star medium-grade mystic arm. The aura it gives off is impressive, but the scarlet blade and the meter long ancient sword give off even stronger energy... They could be four or even five-star mystic arms!'

"If I can make the talisman release a force field again, I might have a shot at obtaining all of the mystic arms." Ye Wei mumbled to himself.

Throughout the history of Green Moon City there were only few three-star medium-grade mystic arms seen by the public in auction houses, but of course, there were families that were hiding mystic arms and scrolls in their vaults for emergencies. For example, the Ye family. Due to its age and heritage they had a three-star medium-grade mystic arm that was passed down from one patriarch to the next. Knowing that most of the citizens had not seen any medium-grade arms above three-stars, Ye Wei was startled by the fact that he was standing in front of two of them.

“These grooves...” Ye Wei placed the talisman in the middle of his palm and carefully inspected it. He gently touched the grooves and slowly ran his finger along all eighty-one of them.

‘So this talisman can absorb energy from the blood devourer crystals’ and the Qi in the spectral black flames... These grooves seem to shine a little brighter every time the talisman absorbs energy and when it is released it generates a force field. All eighty-one grooves were lit when that happens if I remember correctly...’ Ye Wei theorized while he stroked the talisman.

‘I’m going to try something!’ Ye Wei said while staring at the eighty-one grooves. He grunted quietly as he channeled Qi from his hand into the talisman.

“Zoom!”

The talisman shone with a ghostly glow and suddenly Ye Wei’s Qi was completely absorbed into the mysterious device. Meanwhile, the grooves started to light up with a brilliant silver glow.

The first groove was filled up, so was the second.

“I knew it!” Ye Wei widened his eyes as the silver light excited him. ‘Take everything I have!’ He channeled more Qi to his finger as he stroked the talisman.

As Ye Wei’s Qi rushed into the talisman, more and more of the grooves were lit up. After a while, when Ye Wei’s dantian was nearly empty, eleven out of eighty-one were shining silver.

‘I guess all eighty-one grooves need to be filled before I can activate the force field again! That is a lot of Qi. I emptied my dantian and only one-eighth of the grooves were filled...’ Ye Wei stared at the dark grooves and thought.

‘Wait, if it’s Qi this talisman wants, I might have a solution!’ Ye Wei felt inspired, he took out his interspatial bag and dug through it. After a while pieces of Qi stones rolled onto the ground.

Ye Wei and Lin Zi Yan had acquired many treasures including a hefty

sum of Qi stones.

The primal energy within Qi stones was pure and dense; therefore, they were not suitable for cultivational use, but they are crucial for the production of mystic arms and pills.

Ye Wei assumed if his talisman could be fueled by the energy of the black flame and blood devourer crystals, then it was entirely possible that Qi stones would be able to fill the grooves.

As expected, when the Qi stones came out of his bag, the talisman started to react. It rattled and flew out of Ye Wei's hand to where the stones were.

“Whoosh!”

The iron talisman circled above the stones and emitted strands of black light creating a vortex that started absorbing the primal energy inside the Qi stones.

“Crack!”

The Qi stones started shattering and turning into dust as the energy within them was drained. The energy formed a silver stream and was quickly absorbed by the dark vortex. While absorbing the energy, the grooves started to gleam, and the gleam eventually grew into a blinding silver light.

Twelve, thirteen... Twenty-five... Eighty-one!

When all the stones turned to dust, all eight-one grooves on the talisman lit up. The amulet once again glowed brightly!

‘That was more than a hundred thousand silver worth of Qi stones...’ There was recognizable sadness in Ye Wei's eyes. His original plan was to present these stones to the patriarch.

Moments after the grooves were filled, the talisman's bright glow dimmed, and the rust patches on it cleared up slightly, but it's Qi presence grew stronger.

“What the hell?” Ye Wei grabbed the talisman to feel the energy within

it. He could sense that energy from the stones transformed into the presence he felt when the force field was deployed!

‘But why did it get dimmer?’

Ye Wei pondered. ‘It feels more powerful than before. I think filling the grooves charges it up and that it will get stronger after every time it’s fully charged. The next force field should be more powerful... I think.’

It was the second time the talisman was fully charged after fallen into Ye Wei’s possession, and now it looked less beaten up than when he found it behind the rune barrier.

‘I did waste a lot of Qi stones, but I guess it’s worth it!’ Ye Wei was excited to have discovered some of the talisman’s secrets. His childish face made him look like a kid who just found a new toy. ‘So if I want to make it more powerful, I will have to feed it Qi and any kind of energy I find!’

There was no switch on the talisman but Ye Wei could feel a spiritual link to it, and therefore, he assumed he could activate the force field that way.

‘Now I have to get myself the scarlet blade and the ancient sword!’ Ye Wei glared at the mystic arms buried in the ground. With the talisman in his hand, he slowly walked towards the stone monument.

‘I will take the sword out first!’

Ye Wei carefully wrapped his hand around the hilt, and after a low grunt, he pulled the sword out with all his strength.

“Boom!”

Immediately when it was pulled out, the stance within activated. Ye Wei could see hundred meters long silver light flying towards him with the momentum of a flooding river. The energy shook the whole swamp.

The stream of silvery energy transformed into seven spectral swords which formed a circular array. The wheel of swords gave off a blinding aura like the midday sun.

The sword wheel spun and flew towards Ye Wei leaving a charred trail and a fissure in its path; a path that was heading towards him at a fearsome speed.

‘Forbidden low-level Myst stance – Flaring Sword Wheel!’

Staring at the sword wheel, Ye Wei’s pupils dilated. He knew he was staring at a life-threatening stance and as such he activated the talisman without any hesitation.

Strictly speaking, forbidden low-level Myst stances were threatening even to seven-star condensed prime warriors, not to mention medium-grade mystic scrolls. Ye Wei was not even sure if the talisman could stop the sword wheel.

“Zoom!”

The talisman reacted to Ye Wei’s inner voice, and a mysterious silver light burst forth creating a hundred meters wide force field that covered part of the swamp.

As the force field emerged, Ye Wei felt his body sink. It was as if a mountain fell on his shoulders along with his blood which froze and stopped flowing.

The force field’s pressure was much greater than the last time. Although Ye Wei was only immobilized by the force for a brief moment, the tremendous force still impacted him enough for a line of blood to flow out of his mouth.

Ye Wei, being the talisman’s owner, soon became immune to the force field’s energy.

The moment Ye Wei was free to move again, he took a scroll out of his bag and unrolled it, just in case the force field could not suppress the sword wheel on its own. If the sword wheel could break free, he would immediately tear the scroll.

Holding tightly onto the scroll, Ye Wei raised his head to look at the sword wheel. Not only did the wheel stopped spinning, but the flickering light around it also froze in the air.

‘Even forbidden low-level Myst stances are no match for the force field?!’

Ye Wei was relieved to see this scene, but just as he loosened his shoulders, the sword wheel started to rattle. Its presence was greatly dampened, but it seemed to be slowly building momentum again.

‘I should have known...’

“Hold it!” Ye Wei did not take his eyes off the sword wheel that was rattling and trying to rush towards him. He wasted no more time and tore the scroll.

“Swoosh!” Hundreds of runes burst forth, forming a thick black vine. It flew towards and wrapped around the rattling sword wheel.

As the vine tightened its hold on the sword wheel, Ye Wei tore yet another scroll.

‘Low-level Myst stance – Howling Wolf!’

With a burst of light, a three meters tall spectral silver wolf appeared in the sky. It opened its mouth and exposed sharp metallic teeth, then let out a long, deafening howl while a silver ball of energy grew on its tongue.

“Tzzzz!”

The wolf spat out the ball of energy expelling air out of its path. The ball left behind a vacuum trail as it made its way to the sword wheel.

Constricted by the force field and the black vine, the sword wheel was held still in the air. It was not a surprise that the silver ball of energy found its target.

After the first energy ball landed, the silver wolf kept spitting more of them out, and one by one they crashed onto the sword wheel. After eighteen balls landed the spectral wolf faded. The sword wheel also started to disintegrate into seven swords which scattered over the ground.

Ye Wei exhaled with relief. His heart was in his throat, but slowly he calmed down.

Chapter 89: Abyss

Held by both, the force field and the black vine python, the sword wheel was finally defeated after being struck by the Howling Wolf stance over eighteen times.

‘The Flaring Sword Wheel was not controlled by anyone but still packed immense power, if someone was holding that ancient sword, I know I wouldn’t be able to suppress it this easily... Forbidden low-level Myst stances are just ridiculously strong!’

‘Before the force field fades, I should deal with the scarlet blade!’ Ye Wei quickly leaped back to the stone monument and pulled the mystic arm out of the mud.

‘Peak low-level Myst stance – Blood Riverblade!’

‘This is much weaker than the sword!’

As soon as the lengthy blood-colored Qi blade appeared, created by the mystic arm, it was frozen in place by the force field.

Right when Ye Wei thought he had everything under control, he felt an approaching presence from the woods. It seemed the wild beast was curious, apparently drawn forth to the swamp by the Qi disturbance.

A loud roar sounded out, deafening like thunder. The whole swamp shook, the ground rattled and a fearsome presence greater than a condensed prime Warrior was approaching. Ye Wei felt like he was in trouble.

Up till now, Master Yi was the strongest cultivator Ye Wei had ever met. In normal cultivation terms, Master Yi was a ten-star condensed prime Warrior, but the presence hidden behind the trees was much greater than what he felt in the Ye’s family arena.

“Sh*t!” Ye Wei’s face turned pale and drops of sweat started pouring down his forehead; he could feel that a pair of cold eyes was focusing on him!

Ye Wei held his breath and kept still. He was afraid that if he moved,

the beast would feel like his territory was being challenged. After a few moments of complete quietness, Ye Wei could feel that the beast was no longer looking at him, and the fearsome presence quickly backed off like a falling tide.

A cold breeze sent a shiver down Ye Wei's spine. "Phew!" After making sure the beast was far away, Ye Wei finally felt safe enough to breathe again. He kept staring at the woods, afraid that the beast might return. Ye Wei could not believe his luck if the beast were to pursue him; no scrolls or items could save his life, but he still needed to deliver all the treasures back home and save his cousin's life, so he did not want to just die here.

'This is not a safe place to stay!' Ye Wei turned his head back to the blood-colored Qi blade. 'I don't have any time to waste!' He then tore yet another medium-grade scroll.

"Zoom!"

Hundreds of runes burst forth. The sequences intertwined in the air and transformed into a purple spear. Ye Wei quickly drove the spectral weapon towards the red Qi stripe created by the scarlet blade.

"Pop!"

The purple spear penetrated and shredded the blood-colored Qi blade. It only took seconds before both the spectral spear and the blade disappeared. Calmness once again was restored in the swamp as the talisman fell to the ground.

Ye Wei grabbed the talisman and then went forth to collect the mystic arms.

"Four-star medium-grade!?" There was an undisguised smile on Ye Wei's face. He held the scarlet blade and was extremely euphoric as he recognized the incredible energy that flowed within it.

'If I give this to grandpa he would be able to fight a seven-star, maybe even an eight-star condensed prime Warrior although he is just a three-star condensed prime Warrior himself!' The Ye family was Ye Wei's root; he couldn't help but imagine how these weapons could benefit his family

back home.

Back when the Du family was trying to plot against them, if the Du Patriarch didn't have those medium-grade scrolls with him then the Ye Patriarch would have been able to fight the whole Du camp alone with his powerful three-star medium-grade bracelet.

"This ancient sword..." Ye Wei put the scarlet blade into his bag, and then he turned his attention to the sword. He was certain, the sword's wheel stance, that he fought, was a forbidden low-level Mystic stance which meant the sword was a five-star medium-grade mystic arm!

"Five-star medium-grade!" Ye Wei's eyes glittered with joy as he placed his hand on the sword, its blade engraved with star constellations.

"It was a forbidden stance; therefore, it must take a lot of Qi to activate this sword... Even grandpa might have trouble using it!" Ye Wei mumbled to himself as he put the sword inside his bag.

'It shouldn't matter much if anyone learned that the Ye family had acquired three, four-star medium-grade mystic arms, but this five-star one should not see the sun just yet. I think even the City Lord himself might be envious of such a valuable treasure.'

After putting the two mystic arms in his bag, Ye Wei smiled satisfyingly. He had never possessed so many valuable things in his life. This trip to Bloodmist Valley had so far been a lot more rewarding than he expected. Not only did he acquire what he came here for, but he also got his hands on what could make the Ye family great again.

'I have to find Zi Yan as soon as possible.' Ye Wei cautiously looked at the woods again, haunted by the fear he just experienced. He bent his knees and launched himself towards the other side of the swamp.

For a seven-star Student who has the Qi capacity of a nine-star Student walking on water was not such a hard task.

Occupied by the sword wheel, Ye Wei did not notice that the stone monument actually rattled when he pulled out the mystic arms and that the backside of the stone tablet was starting to glow. Now that he was

close to the edge of the swamp, the tablet was covered in runes.

“Zoom!”

The stone tablet was now rattling more and more, and the runes on it came alive.

“Brummm!”

A loud rumble caused Ye Wei to turn his head, curious to find out the source of this deafening noise. Ye Wei scanned the swamp behind him and saw a shining object.

‘What is that stone tablet doing?’

The rattling intensified and the whole realm shook as the stone tablet flew up into the air. The sky darkened, and the land quaked. The mountains were shaking so much it looked as if they were trembling in fear.

‘This can’t be good...’ Ye Wei’s heart dropped. His heart was beating so fast he could see his chest moving.

“Boom! Boom!”

The swamp suddenly sank into a crack. The black water evaporated and created an unpleasant smell in the air.

The land split into two parts before Ye Wei’s eyes. The swamp disappeared into a twenty-kilometer long abyss that reached to the heavens and extended deep down into the center of the realm.

“Roar!”

A shrill scream, followed by the sound of rattling metal chains, reached Ye Wei’s ears from the depths of the abyss. It was the sound of the chained demons fighting for their freedom!

The scream and the rattling grew stronger as if the monsters were reaching up to the surface. The louder the sound got, the paler Ye Wei’s face turned.

“Tzzzzzz!”

A mist of black smoke started oozing out of the cracked earth, and Ye Wei could see the silhouettes of a large demon horde.

The fearsome presence overwhelmed Ye Wei and sent a shiver down his spine. He shook and fell to the ground after taking a few steps back and despite his best efforts, he was having trouble breathing normally and moving his body.

‘What is this...’

Just as Ye Wei thought the demons were going to escape the abyss, an explosion of bright runic light erupted from the stone tablet. Millions of runes materialized and formed a pillar of golden energy. The runes then started to react with each other and released an astounding wave of energy.

The pillar shone down into the abyss, brightened up the darkness and disintegrated the black smoke. After a series of loud cries, the demons quieted down and the abyss returned to its previous calmness.

Ye Wei’s eyes widened, and he stared at the stone tablet. He could not feel any strength in his body; he was just sitting on the ground gasping for air. ‘What the hell is this?’ The shivering didn’t stop, although the demons’ cries did.

But after the brief moment of peace, Ye Wei sensed a greater evil presence within the depths of the abyss. An even thicker screen of black mist exploded out of the huge rift in the ground. This presence was more than a hundred times stronger than the others!

“Boom! Boom!”

Within the black mist, a red glow shone through. A three-headed serpent appeared in the mist, and parts of its kilometers long body came out of the black shroud revealing its blood red scales.

The serpent then squeezed a loud cry out of its elongated lungs shattering the bright runic pillar, emerging out of the black mist. Its mouth was wide open as it flew towards the stone tablet trying to swallow the artifact.

The serpent's cry shook the entire realm. Ye Wei was already far far away, but the impact struck him hard. He could taste rust in his mouth and the next thing he knew, he was vomiting blood.

“Zoom! Zoom!”

The stone tablet rattled violently as if it was trying to match the serpent's intensity, and more runes burst forth. Numerous runic energy pillars burnt through the black smoke and then landed on the serpent's muscular body where they left a few large holes.

Struck by the stone tablet's counter strike, the serpent rolled around in pain, but it was not giving up. Instead, it flew up viciously as a dark ball of energy grew inside its mouth.

The dark energy sphere was glowing red and filled with electricity. After a while, when the ball of energy was fully charged the serpent spat it out towards the stone tablet. Its colossal momentum had the power to shatter the earth.

As the dark sphere was about to connect with the stone tablet, the realm's natural primal energy resonated within the tablet and strands of billion rune sequences burst out of the tablet in every direction!

Chapter 90: Glacial Temple

The blue and green lights of the stone monument melted together as the runes fused. These billions of light strands formed the outline of a magnificent temple-like structure in mid-air right above the abyss.

The stone monument disappeared into a flash of blinding light and became the cornerstone of the temple. Seconds after it was in place, the temple started to materialize.

Immediately after the temple appeared, its supreme presence was felt throughout the realm – from the edge of the skies to the very depths of the abyss. An array of runes grew and burst forth from the temple's peak; it shone down a thick blue pillar of light.

The pillar bored a hole through the sea of thick black smoke and landed directly on the serpent's head. Hit by a force greater than the weight of a mountain, the serpent was dragged back down to the bottom of the abyss before it could even cry or struggle free.

“Zoom! Zoom!”

Floating on top of the abyss, the temple emitted a majestic aura. Its energy quickly patched and repaired the rift in the ground; the abyss that so suddenly appeared and split the ground turned into a narrow gap and eventually disappeared. Just seconds later there was no trace that the abyss had ever been there.

The beast in the woods, the abyss that suddenly appeared, and the levitating temple which swiftly closed the abyss, suppressing the serpent and demons inside, all happened too quickly one after another. Ye Wei's mind was numb; it was as if he had been stuck by a sledge hammer so many times that now he could feel nothing.

“Phew...”

Ye Wei exhaled slowly and raised his head to look at the grand temple. His face displayed utter fascination. He couldn't even imagine what kind of technique was used to build this majestic runic structure.

“Zoom! Zoom!”

While Ye Wei was still in shock, the sky suddenly distorted and a surge of mysterious energy penetrated the dimension. This caused a wormhole to appear as, Hong Xun, Xue Yao, and a few hundred Warriors fell from the sky.

“Bang! Boom!”

All of them looked very confused as they clumsily fell to the ground one by one. While everyone was screaming and sobbing in pain, Hong Xun and Xue Yao were able to summon two pairs of primal wings on their backs, stabilizing their bodies just after few flaps.

“Little bro!”

“Boy!” Hong Xun and Xue Yao were happy to see Ye Wei; they wondered why he looked so sluggish at a closer glance.

“Huh?” Ye Wei was not really responsive, even though Hong Xun and Xue Yao flew closer to greet him, his eyes were still set on the sky.

They followed Ye Wei’s sight to see what he was looking at. Their eyes widen as they saw the floating temple, neither of them could contain their excitement and shock.

“This is... Is this the legendary Glacial Temple? So this labyrinth is left behind by that man!” Hong Xun and Xue Yao looked at each other and shared a surprised glance.

“What temple?” Ye Wei knew that he just heard an important name but he knew nothing about it. Ye Wei, curious to find out what the two words meant, he looked confusedly at Hong Xun and Xue Yao as it was apparent that they knew something about this place.

“That is...”

“What a magnificent temple!”

“Oh god! Where the hell are we?!” Amused by the sight, the Warriors began to stand up.

“There is no mistake. We are at the Glacial Emperor’s tomb!” Hong Xun

clenched his fist as he stared at the temple with fiery eyes.

“Definitely!”

There was a slight redness on Xue Yao’s face, her heart beating faster; she was nodding excitedly.

“Glacial temple? Emperor’s tomb?” Ye Wei slightly frowned and with a questioning gaze he asked Xue Yao who seemed to be overly excited.

Xue Yao’s eyes lingered on the temple. After making an effort to turn her head, she finally switch her attention elsewhere. “Little boy, you are here for the Glacial Emperor’s tomb right?” She asked with a gentle smile on her face.

“Who is the Glacial Emp...” Frustrated and feeling like secrets had been kept from him, Ye Wei frowned again. But as he was about to ask a question, a loud angry voice from a distance was heard in his ears.

“Lin Zi Yan, give me that Condensing Primal pill!” Jin Yan was pointing his golden spear right at Lin Zi Yan; his bloodshot eyes were staring at the levitating, purple-haired girl.

“Lin Zi Yan, you are going too far! There are ten Condensing Primal pills and you want to take them all?!” Mo Ya shouted as he stood on his sword. His long hair was gracefully flowing in the wind, and his cold gaze pierced Lin Zi Yan.

Her eyes flashed purple, as always when she was angry or mad, but her face showed indifference while staring Mo Ya and Jin Yan down. Lin Zi Yan did not speak a word, she just put the pills into her bag, answering with action instead.

“I only want three pills, Lin Zi Yan! Don’t push me any further because I will fight you!” Seeing that she had put the pills away, Jin Yan’s face darkened. With anger glowing in his eyes he was ready to thrust his spear through her.

“Three!” Mo Ya looked at Lin Zi Yan from a distance. He indifferently held up three fingers. A swirl of powerful Qi started to form around him, energizing the air, his robe was flowing in the windless sky. He was

definitely a fierce enemy any cultivator would be scared of.

“It’s Jin Yan, Mo Ya, and the girl from that family!” The shouting caught everyone’s attention. They turned their eyes from the temple to the three strongest Warriors present, looking at them with great respect.

“Condensing Primal pill?! How lucky are they to have found such a rarity?!” Hong Xun glanced at the trio, his face slightly changing color while his eyes shown with undisguised envy.

“People from that family really can’t be measured by a normal scale. She is not even at the same cultivation level as her opponents and still she was able to make them dance on her palm, getting everything she wants?!”

“With just one of the pills, surely one of their family members could easily break through to the level of condensed prime Warrior! No wonder Jin Yan and Mo Ya are so angry!” Xue Yao heard that Condensing Primal pills were mentioned in their conversation, and desire was apparent on her pretty face.

The barrier between a Warrior and a condensed prime Warrior was incredibly vast, in the history of cultivation there were countless ten-star Warriors who were stopped by this wall and died without ever becoming condensed prime Warriors.

When ten-star Warriors attempt to breakthrough, they would have to fight their own evil desires. The ones who couldn’t defeat their inner demons during the process would never progress any further.

In Green Moon City, for example, resided several thousand ten-star Warriors; however, there were only a handful of condensed prime Warriors. This gap clearly reflected the difficulty of breaking through the Warrior realm.

On the other hand, it was a completely different story for someone in the possession of a Condensing Primal pill. Taking just one pill grants a Warrior at least a ninety percent probability to fight off their demons and advance to the condensed prime level.

Both Jin Yan and Mo Ya were peak ten-star Warriors, they were qualified and physically prepared to attempt a breakthrough, the only thing holding them back was that they were uncertain about how they would deal with their inner demons.

Therefore, Jin Yan's and Mo Ya's desire for a Condensing Primal pills could easily be imagined.

After being teleported to this realm, Jin Yan and Mo Ya were extremely thrilled to have found these pills, and thinking that breaking through was now a certainty, they started to imagine all the possibilities their future would hold. All that just to have their dreams come crashing down because of some girl who happened to be faster than they had thought.

There was no way Jin Yan and Mo Ya would let Lin Zi Yan take all the pills! If it was any other treasure maybe they could let it go because they were born with golden chopsticks in their mouths, but for these pills, they would fight Lin Zi Yan even if they had to face the consequences of angering that family. Both of them were determined to use all it took to obtain the pills!

"There are ten pills in total, what do you say to Jin Yan taking three, I can take three, and you can have four. I really do respect your family, please don't force us to fight you. Like Jin Yan said, there is nothing more valuable to us than these pills!" Mo Ya politely said to her, but his tone of voice was harsh in contrast.

"These are the first Condensing Primal pills I've ever gotten. Why should I share them with you? I got my hands on them before either of you did." Lin Zi Yan arched her brow in surprise as she spoke keeping her beautiful voice clear, steady, and emotionless. "One pill is more than enough for you to reach Condensed Prime level. Both of you are just being greedy."

"One Condensing Primal pill might not be enough to guarantee a breakthrough!" Jin Yan grunted.

"I have been a ten-star Warrior for more than a year, and Mo Ya couldn't be more correct. There is nothing I want more than these pills!

And I, Jin Yan, get what I want!” Jin Yan held his golden spear even tighter while floating in the air. Jin Yan thirsted for blood. He stared coldly at Lin Zi Yan and said with a prideful tone, “Even if you are from that family, I can see that your cultivation level is close to ours. That means if nothing else you are just their distant relative! You should behave and learn to respect others!”

“It’s ten Condensing Primal pills we are talking about. I am sure I can use them for something else, instead of just giving them away.” Lin Zi Yan shook her head and glanced towards the ground. Her eyes shone with joy and confusion when she spotted Ye Wei; she didn’t expect him to get this far.

In the future, both herself and Ye Wei will have to face the ten-star Warrior breakthrough, and that was why she was not willing to give in.

“Just giving them away... Is it so? Now I feel offended.” A shadow of bitterness flickered over Mo Ya’s handsome face. He slowly stretched out his fingers and quickly drew hundreds of runes forming a unique pattern.

Mo Ya’s silvery Qi flowed through the pattern linking all the runes together and forming a three meter long green spectral sword that pointed right at Lin Zi Yan’s heart.

“Humph!”

Jin Yan grunted, and he stomped his foot while waving his golden spear around as he sped towards Lin Zi Yan

“Jin Yan! You will have to go through me!” Suddenly, Ye Wei tore one of the medium-grade scrolls he had left. Runes written in the blood of demons poured out of it creating a pair of translucent wings on Ye Wei’s back.

Ye Wei wings shook gently causing him to travel so quick that he became a flash of light and reappeared between Jin Yan and Lin Zi Yan.

Even though Lin Zi Yan had extraordinary strength, it was still a challenge for her to deal with two ten-star warriors all by herself. She could only bank on using her Shadowshift stance to buy herself some

time and avoid serious injury.

Seeing that Lin Zi Yan was in a bit of trouble, Ye Wei couldn't just stand there and watch. It shouldn't be a problem for him to entertain Jin Yan for a while, or even defeat him, with as many medium-grade scrolls as he had.

Chapter 91: Close Combat

“Huh?” Jin Yan frowned as he watched Ye Wei fly towards him wondering why a Student would dare challenge himself.

“Piss off!”

Jin Yan glared at Ye Wei with a disdainful gaze. Without the slightest concern for Ye Wei’s feelings, he spat out the insult. He stomped his foot in Ye Wei’s direction, and the moment his foot went down an invisible force wave spread in the sky. The rippling wave gathered and shot towards Ye Wei.

Jin Yan’s Qi distorted the air around him, and his overbearing presence made Ye Wei feel and look tiny.

“Ye Wei!” Lin Zi Yan was distracted while confronting Mo Ya and concerned was evident on her face. She didn’t expect to run into Ye Wei here, and never would she expect Ye Wei to stand up against Jin Yan to protect her. She did give Ye Wei a few medium-grade scrolls, but she did not expect him to use them this way, nor did she think Ye Wei stood a chance against Jin Yan.

“Lin Zi Yan, I strongly advise you focus on your opponent, especially when that opponent is me!” Just when Lin Zi Yan was ready to launch herself to Ye Wei’s side, Mo Ya made a move. In just a flash he appeared in her path. He flung his Qi sword at her with a flick of his wrist.

The Green Qi sword tore through the air and approached Lin Zi Yan leaving a shrilling whistle behind it; it was right in front of her in mere seconds.

Lin Zi Yan’s face changed, and sparks of purple flame appeared on her fingertips as she lifted her hand. The fire soon turned into a sequence of runes as her finger danced in the air.

Mo Ya was, in the end, a ten-star Warrior at his peak, and Lin Zi Yan could not take the threat he imposed lightly.

After placing runes and sparks of fire in the air each of them grew into

a little flying serpent. Feeling the pressure on him, Mo Ya wiggled his finger, tried to rid the Qi serpents by striking them with his Qi sword.

Lin Zi Yan was not trying to fight Mo Ya, she just wished to distract him so she could be by Ye Wei's side, but Mo Ya answered each of these attempts to escape with a devastating sword strike blocking her path.

"Zi Yan, don't worry about me. I will be fine!" Ye Wei said while he calmly stared at Jin Yan who clearly did not understand his confidence. Jin Yan then chuckled as he spun his spear over his head sending a sharp, invisible force wave at Ye Wei.

Ye Wei sped up dramatically as the translucent wings on his back flapped forcefully. His agile movements made it easy to dodge Jin Yan's powerful strike, but knowing that it was only the beginning of the fight, Ye Wei reached into his bag and took out a low-level scroll.

"Hahaha!" Jin Yan laughed insolently when he saw the black glow in Ye Wei's hand, "You are hilarious! Please don't hit me with that low-grade trash. I am very ticklish! Scrolls or arms just take them out now; you're gonna need a lot more to stay alive! I will show you what it means to be truly powerful without all these pathetic items!"

Jin Yan roared, and all of a sudden his body was wrapped in a golden light and flickering runes. Without moving a muscle, a stance was forming in front of him. It was a three-meter tall spirit bear with golden fur which appeared. It raised its muscular arm, and the next thing Ye Wei saw was a gigantic paw rushing at his face.

"Forbidden high-level Spirit stance – Golden Bear!" Down on the ground, Hong Xun and Xue Yao were staring at the spirit bear. Every single Warrior, who fought alongside Ye Wei, was becoming wary.

Normally, users of forbidden stances would be struck by a recoil force, but Jin Yan just casually used a forbidden Spirit stance as if he did not care about the after effects!

The power of forbidden stances varies, and the recoil force would also vary accordingly. If a fighter was strong enough or his or her Sentient was exceptional, the recoil force won't have as much effect on them as it

would on normal cultivators.

Jin Yan was a ten-star Warrior, and actually one of the strongest ten-star Warrior ever. With the three-star medium-grade mystic arm in hand, he could even take on a condensed prime Warrior. His body and Sentient were tough enough for him to pretty much ignore the recoil.

“Hey! Watch out!”

“That kid won’t make it!”

“He saved our lives. Guys do something!”

“Jin Yan you shameless excuse of a cultivator! You’re a peak ten-star Warrior, and you’re actually using a forbidden stance against a mere Student? You bloodthirsty bastard!”

“Help him!”

Everyone was on Ye Wei’s side. The oath they made meant they had to help each other, but they knew Ye Wei had saved their lives and even if they didn’t make a vow they would still have helped him here and now just out of appreciation to what he did for them.

Jin Yan might be one of the strongest people in the labyrinth, but he was also alone, with the treasures they acquired it was entirely possible for them to defeat Jin Yan!

“Screw his mother!” With the sound of cursing and swearing, hundreds of Warriors fired their stances in the air towards Jin Yan. The ones who were seven-stars and above spread their primal wings and flew next to Ye Wei to fight by his side.

“Mid-level Spirit stance – Hailstorm Sword!”

“Mid-level Spirit stance – Rolling Stone Punch!”

“High-level Spirit stance – Firewolf Strike!” The sky was filled with runes. Hundreds of spectral weapons and beasts came crushing towards the golden bear.

“Bang! Boom!”

None of these stances would have left a scratch on Jin Yan, but the sheer amount of them were making it impossible for the Golden Bear stance to gain an advantage. It only took moments before the Golden Bear crumbled into blinding runic lights.

Staring at the stances flying towards him, Jin Yan could not be rash. Surprise was evident on his face as he flew backwards and deflected stance after stance that rushed towards him; he couldn't understand why he was suddenly the common enemy of this many Warriors.

"Little bro, are you okay?" Hong Xun went in front of Ye Wei and patted his shoulders then he turned back around to Jin Yan. There was a determined glow in both Ye Wei's and Hong Xun's eyes.

"Thank you so much!" Ye Wei exclaimed gratefully. If Hong Xun and the others didn't step in, he wouldn't even have the time to talk while fighting Jin Yan.

"Hahaha! Little bro, did you forget we made an oath? We can't just stand back and watch even if we feel lazy! Hong Xun said jokingly.

Jin Yan's face darkened as he pointed his spear at Ye Wei and the Warriors then said, "All of you, piss off! Consider yourselves warned. From this moment I will not hold back!" Although he was facing this many Warriors, he didn't seem to be scared.

The Warriors down on the ground rose up.

"Humm... He's a ten-star Warrior right. I've never used a scroll before, and I really want to try it, to be honest. Now is as good a time as any!"

"This low-grade arm, I just got it back in the chamber and I don't really know what stance is in it! I want to try my new stuff too!" Confidence comes with numbers and armed with scrolls and weapons the Warriors were not as scared as they were when they first met Jin Yan at the rune barrier. They were actually prepared to fight if Jin Yan wanted to do anything to Ye Wei.

Jin Yan stared at the Warrior who flew between him and Ye Wei then turned his focus to the Warriors on the ground. 'They are all holding

mystic arms or scrolls...'

Undoubtedly Jin Yan was one of the strongest cultivators here. He could easily take on ten Warriors by himself on a typical day, but when there were hundreds of armed Warriors in front of him, he could not just ignore them.

Unless he was a condensed prime Warrior, and even then he would need a miracle to defeat this large armed group of Warriors and come out unharmed.

Every single one of these Warriors were armed with some kind of powerful item, and furthermore, they were bonded together by the heavenly oath. If he wanted to fight one of them he needed to be prepared to fight all of them.

Facing so many people even Jin Yan, confident and powerful as he was, knew better than to take this group of Warriors lightly.

Lin Zi Yan leaped backwards and stared at the Warriors who were shielding Ye Wei then glanced towards the rest of the group. 'All these weaklings are from different powers and families, why would all of them help Ye Wei as if he was one of their own people. Even I wouldn't want to fight someone like Jin Yan!'

'What happened after I separated with these guys? I guess I'm glad they found these weapons and scrolls and somehow are now fond of little Wei. Jin Yan shouldn't be dumb enough to make a move now.' She was relieved as she could see Ye Wei was in safe hands.

While Lin Zi Yan was distracted by Ye Wei, Mo Ya spotted this moment of opportunity. He wiggled his fingers and flung his Qi sword at Lin Zi Yan's blind spot when she was looking away!

"I told you I do not want to fight, but I guess there are no other ways to shut you up!" Lin Zi Yan leaped into the air, and her dress flowing in the wind made her look like a mythical goddess descending from the heavens. Her eyes were burning with a purple flame while her hands formed many complex hand seals.

Lin Zi Yan was suddenly surrounded by a blinding purple light, and her presence exploded. Just when the green Qi sword was inches away from her body, she lifted up two fingers then they clamped onto each side of the sharp Qi sword!

Her slender fingers were packed with power and with a crisp cracking sound, the enormous green sword shattered like glass. Lin Zi Yan then quickly wrapped her purple Qi around the shattered pieces and flung them right back at Mo Ya.

It took less than a second for Lin Zi Yan to react to Mo Ya's strike. The Qi sword was sent back to him before he even registered what had just happened. In a panic, Mo Ya pulled his sword in front of his chest to defend himself.

Flashes of purple landed on the sword, and a burst of violent force exploded at the point of impact.

The enormous recoil force knocked Mo Ya back. He flew backwards like a kite without a string; he couldn't stabilize his balance until he was fifty meters behind where he got hit.

"What strength!" Mo Ya looked down at his bleeding hand; he had never been this concerned all his life. He raised his head to look at Lin Zi Yan, and this was the moment of his life he would later recall as 'The first time I tasted genuine fear.'

Lin Zi Yan was way stronger than he expected!

Mo Ya did not pursue her. It was clear that even with his three-star medium-grade sword, there was no point to carry on their fighting as Lin Zi Yan possessed power that can not be compared to any fighting techniques he was taught.

Mo Ya flew back to Jin Yan's side, and Lin Zi Yan retreated to Ye Wei's side.

Ye Wei, Lin Zi Yan, and the Warriors were on one side with Jin Yan and Mo Ya on another. The atmosphere became heavy as nobody said anything.

“What should we do now?” Jin Yan looked at Ye Wei cautiously as he consulted Mo Ya in a whisper.

‘Mo Ya can’t do anything to Lin Zi Yan, and I got myself stuck... I can’t fight all of them on my own!’ Jin Yan was extremely frustrated as he did not want to give the pills to Lin Zi Yan.

“Lin Zi Yan, I can’t just let you have the pills like this! Let’s hear a deal from your side; let’s be civil and we can negotiate like adults!” Mo Ya looked up and said with a slight stutter. He was not used to asking for favors at all.

Chapter 92: Enter the Temple

‘If we can’t fight her we will have to talk it out!’

Jin Yan shared a look with Mo Ya, ground his teeth as he was getting mentally ready to compromise.

Lin Zi Yan was more selfish than she was considerate but being a ten-star Warrior herself she could relate to their frustration.

‘There are only ten pills. I have these seals on my body, and it will be harder for me to breakthrough to the condensed prime Warrior level than everyone else. I will need around five pills for myself to be safe, and I need to save some for Ye Wei...’

“Zi Yan, if we really want to we can just fight them. I don’t think they can take all of us!” Ye Wei thought as he could see that Lin Zi Yan was frustrated. He briefly looked at Jin Yan and Mo Ya, ‘Finders keepers! That has always been the rule in these kinds of situations. Why do they think they can just ask for the pills when Zi Yan was the one who got her hands on them first?’

Thinking about the thirty odd scrolls in his bag and how he was backed up by hundreds of strong cultivators, Ye Wei was actually feeling pretty confident.

“Mo Ya, Jin Yan, both of you know how rare these pills are. You couldn’t buy them even if you had the money for them! I need them as much as you two do!”

“I can give one pill away!” Lin Zi Yan laid one pill on her palm and said calmly.

“One pill?” Jin Yan’s face darkened. It was obvious that Lin Zi Yan was trying to turn Mo Ya against him; therefore, he shook his head and made a counter offer that involved an even number. “Four pills at least! Name your price!”

Mo Ya also saw through Lin Zi Yan’s cheeky plan. He frowned and said, “Yeah, four pills. That’s the bottom line.”

“Only one. I have a use for the rest of them.” Lin Zi Yan determinedly shook her head. There was no way she would let Mo Ya and Jin Yan take four pills from her.

“No? How about two then?” Mo Ya and Jin Yan were desperate, and they were too stressed to hide it.

“One pill and I will trade it for no less than eight hundred thousand silver, or something of the same value. Final offer. If you don’t want it all the better!” Lin Zi Yan sounded determined.

“Eight hundred, what? Why don’t you go rob the City Lord?” Jin Yan’s face darkened further, and his eyes twitched as he spoke, ‘Even I can’t come up with that much money.’

Mo Ya frowned. He was deep in thought and didn’t talk, ‘If I were her, I wouldn’t give the pills up easily either... If Jin Yan and I were in a better position then fine, but now they really do have the advantage. There is no real reason for her to give us any pills. As ridiculous as her offer sounds, I think this is actually decent.’ Mo Ya acquired a lot of treasures from this labyrinth, so much so that it would make up for the price Lin Zi Yan proposed.

“No? Fine then.” Lin Zi Yan said and put the pill back inside her bag.

“Wait! Eight hundred thousand correct? I will take your offer!” Mo Ya stepped forward and threw his interspatial bag to Lin Zi Yan, “This is everything I have with me. I’ve acquired quite a bit since I stepped in this labyrinth. I’m sure this is worth eight hundred thousand silver if not more!”

“Mo Ya... What are you doing?”

Jin Yan’s eyes widened, and he stared at Mo Ya’s silhouette. He was furious and surprised. Until this moment Mo Ya and him were on the same side.

“If I fail my condensing breakthrough then I will need to train for two or even three years to regain my Qi. Only after that could I attempt a breakthrough again. I am not a gambling man, use your common sense,

Jin Yan. Outside of this labyrinth, even if you have eight hundred thousand silver, you won't be able to get yourself half of this pill! And that's if you're lucky enough to find a seller! If you're not taking the offer, you can't blame anyone who does!" Mo Ya said calmly. It was true that Jin Yan has become a person he could trust, but in the end, they were not that close. They only fought alongside each other because they didn't stand a chance against Lin Zi Yan on their own.

"Sure, here's your pill!" Lin Zi Yan caught the bag and after sensing its contents and confirming their value, she threw one of the ten pills to Mo Ya.

"Farewell!"

Mo Ya carefully put away the pill and immediately headed back.

"Good. Excellent!" Jin Yan stared at Mo Ya until he eventually disappeared into the woods. He ground his teeth so hard the grinding noise was audible from where the many Warriors stood. The bulging veins on his head didn't fade for quite a while after Mo Ya was out of sight. After many deep breaths, he looked at Lin Zi Yan and said, "Fine then I will pay you the same amount. Give me a pill!" Jin Yan ground his teeth as he spoke. He looked like he was going to bite someone.

"No. I told both of you, I will only give away one pill!" Lin Zi Yan directed rejected Jin Yan's request. She had already planned to save five for her personal use and four for Ye Wei; there was no room for negotiations.

Mo Ya and Jin Yan as a duo were threatening, but on his own against hundreds of armed Warriors, Jin Yan was nothing.

"Hmpft!" Jin Yan grunted reluctantly. He then turned and quickly flew towards the Glacial Temple.

Seeing that Mo Ya and Jin Yan left, Lin Zi Yan looked at Ye Wei with a friendly glance and smiled, "Let's go. I want to see the Glacial Temple!" She dragged Ye Wei using the Shadowshift stance.

'There is no doubt, the most valuable thing in this labyrinth is hidden

here. And if the rumors are true The emperor also left something else here before he passed.'

"Go!"

"Let's go together!" Hong Xun, Xue Yao, and the Warriors were motivated by the possibility of inheriting the Glacial Emperor's legacy. They could hardly contain themselves.

Everyone flew towards the Glacial Temple.

"Damn it... Damn it!"

"Lin Zi Yan, Mo Ya, and that annoying Student brat! I will remember this! Just wait! I will make sure you all pay!" Jin Yan suppressed his rage, "If I inherit the Glacial Emperor's legacy, none of you will leave here alive!" Looking at the grand structure that was mysteriously floating in the air, Jin Yan stood on his spear and injected Qi into it making the three-star mystic arm levitate. The spear turned into a flash of golden light and brought Jin Yan to the green and blue runic cloud platform outside the temple's gate before anyone could even see the temple's entrance.

"Ha, you guys want the Glacial Emperor's legacy, that is a bit of a reach for you!" Mo Ya was watching on a mountain top as the cultivators flew up to the temple.

"This Jin Yan is an idiot. He doesn't get it. Does he really think it is a good idea to compete with them? It would take a condensed prime Warrior to take them out..."

"Now that I have this pill, I can surely breakthrough right here! When I become a condensed prime Warrior, I will join you in the temple and then I will kill everyone and take everything!"

Mo Ya closed his eyes as he sat down in a lotus position. He swallowed the Condensing Primal pill. He then started cultivating and building up

his Qi to attempt a breakthrough.

Eventually, everyone arrived on the cloud platform, “It looks even bigger when you’re up close.” The temple was over two kilometers tall and decorated with countless precious stones and metals. Beside the platform was twenty stone pillars. Each pillar was so thick that twenty people couldn’t wrap their arms around it; they were like giants’ legs.

In front of this temple, the group of cultivators looked like a small group of ants.

Behind the pillars were thousands of beast fossils. The largest was more than fifty meters tall, and all of these fossilized bones were engraved with runes. They were glittering like wild jade and even still emitted a fierce aura that pressured the nearby cultivators even though these beasts were long dead.

‘Why did the master of this temple place these fossils here?’

Thinking back to the stone giant and the puppets everyone started to shiver. They held their breath afraid that any movement might wake these beasts up.

These fossils were on both sides of the entrance arranged like they were guardians of the temple gate. Following the line of bones to the far side of the platform was the three hundred meter tall tightly shut gate. The gate’s dark metallic shine was dispersing a cold presence.

The tranquility and quietness did not make any of the Warriors feel relaxed; they were all feeling very tense at the moment. They felt as if they were standing in front of heaven’s gate while they wondered what they should do next.

The Glacial Emperor was very much a mythical figure. His name was often heard from bards and storytellers, but nobody was really sure whether to take these stories of his unrivaled powers seriously or not.

As the stories went, the Glacial Emperor was a master of mystic runes. He single-handedly created the Glacier rune set and invented most of the

popular ice related stances. There were tales about how he traveled to the ends of the world and acquired the essence of ice. There were also rumors about how he could turn his body into solid ice at will.

Now seeing this grand structure right before their eyes, it was clear to everyone that the Glacial Emperor did indeed exist, and he might have been even stronger than they had heard judging by this labyrinth and the treasures he left behind.

It was a surprise to many when he disappeared off the face of the planet. Nobody knew where he went and as the centuries passed, every once in awhile one of the emperor's stances would appear, and whoever obtained the ice king's legacy would become a legend themselves.

All the Warriors were now standing in front of the gate, staring at it and wondering how they were to get to the other side.

Everyone there understood that if they could learn even one stance from the Glacial Emperor's collection they could become someone. But at the same time, they were aware the Glacial Emperor did not intend for just anyone to inherit his legacy and the traps and tests inside this temple might just end their lives.

Just when nobody quite knew what to do, Lin Zi Yan stepped forward. Her light steps made her seem more relaxed than she was, and the clueless crowd could not take their eyes off her.

"Zi Yan!" Worried about Lin Zi Yan, Ye Wei held her wrist and pulled her back. He didn't know who the Glacial Emperor was, but he was sure everyone there had a valid reason to be so nervous.

"Relax, it's going to be fine!" Lin Zi Yan turned to Ye Wei and ruffled his hair.

"I'll come with you!" After a brief moment of hesitation, Ye Wei stepped forward alongside her.

Under everyone's attention, they walked the path made of green and blue clouds towards the gate.

All of a sudden the fossils started to rattle and the path lit red from a

blood colored glow that came from these skeletons' eye sockets.

Everyone gasped. These skeletons had a presence similar to, but stronger, than the stone puppets.

Ye Wei too was petrified, digging his hand into his bag and clenching onto a defensive scroll. But unexpectedly, the skeletons did not leave their positions and only then was he relieved.

Lin Zi Yan, on the other hand, was never worried. She walked right in front of the gate and placed her pale, slender hand on the cold metal.

When Lin Zi Yan's small hand touched the gate, a green and blue light burst forth, and before Ye Wei could react, she was sucked into the temple by a mysterious force.

The gate was still sealed shut, but there was no trace of Lin Zi Yan in sight.

"Zi Yan!" Ye Wei's pupils dilated. He ran to the gate without hesitation.

"Zoom! Zoom!"

An energy engulfed Ye Wei's body as he touched the gate. His body was pulled right through the gate as if it was nonexistent.

"They went in?!"

"The girl knows what she's doing; they will be fine."

Startled by how Lin Zi Yan and Ye Wei vanished, everyone felt speechless.

Chapter 93: Understanding

Hong Xun was fascinated by the black glow of the gate. He pondered for a bit then grunted deciding to step forward. He slowly walked to the metal door and placed his hand exactly where Lin Zi Yan placed hers.

A green light rained down from above and enveloped Hong Xun. He then also went through the gate without any problems.

Upon seeing this, the Warriors entered the temple one after another. While some of the less trusting ones remained outside on the cloud-like platform.

“Get out of my way!” Jin Yan shoved the people around him and rushed towards the gate after seeing so many people going through.

When Ye Wei opened his eyes again he found himself inside a spacious hall, ‘Am I inside!?’

He could see the roof of the temple was supported by thirty-six engraved pillars, and each of their diameters was over a hundred meters. While the engravings on the pillars looked to be only decorative, there were arrays of glowing and flowing runes on the ceiling, Ye Wei tried to focus on the pattern and tried to figure out what they were but it was giving him a headache. His eyes were dragged into the pattern and couldn’t help but spin around.

In the middle of these pillars was a levitating jade disc. It was half a kilometer tall and wide; Lin Zi Yan, who was the first to enter the temple, stood in front of the jade wall pondering.

The jade disc was glowing green and was as smooth as a mirror. Apart from its size and the fact that it was levitating, it actually looked rather normal.

The Warriors started to appear inside the hall, and they all looked around curiously. While the hall was a grand and beautiful sight, they were cautious to not touch anything they didn’t understand.

When everyone was curious, confused, and in their own worlds all the pillars suddenly illuminated. Thirty-six beams of bright blue light crossed over the jade disc revealing runes and writing on it.

“Everyone! Welcome to the Glacial Temple!” Everyone’s widened eyes were set on the mysterious jade disc when the low hoarse voice sounded.

Just as the voice was dying down, a blurry hundred meter tall figure appeared in the air by the jade disc where the beams of light converged.

This figure was like a phantom. Nobody could quite figure out what it was at first glance as it looked like flower gazing in the mist. They didn’t know if they were looking at the distorted, shapeless mist of an actual petal. The figure lowered its head and looked at the terrified crowd.

“Whh..who are you?” A few of the Warriors asked with shaking voices. The figure was floating in the air like a ghost. From its posture and features the crowd started to guess that it was the ghost of an old man, and not just any old man judging from his presence which filled the hall.

Ye Wei slowly walked to Lin Zi Yan’s side as he cautiously looked at the large ghostly figure above.

Lin Zi Yan lifted her beautiful face looking at the figure. She tried to memorise all the Glacial Emperor’s tales she had been told since she was a toddler, and now her amusement with him slightly changed now that she knew she could easily lose her life to the protagonist of the stories she once fell asleep to.

“Hahaha! Who am I? I can hardly remember to be honest. You know, time flies when you’re dead; I haven’t needed to use my name for a long time!” The ghostly figure laughed with a bit of bitterness in his voice.

“Your Excellency. Are you perhaps the Glacial Emperor?” Lin Zi Yan’s crisp, sweet voice echoed in hall.

“Glacial Emperor? Haha, no. I am not him, but one of his servants... Oh Yea! Pu Yuan, that was how he called me three hundred something years ago; that’s my name, Pu Yuan!” He seemed happy to remember his name again. After a few chuckles, he calmly looked at the group of cultivators

who stood under him.

‘The Glacial Emperor’s servant?’ Everyone was shocked. They were cultivators, and cultivators know when they are in the presence of powerful individuals. This old man’s figure, his ghost to be more accurate, was the strongest Qi disturbance they had ever felt, and he claimed to be a mere servant?! They couldn’t even imagine what kind of power his master had.

“The Glacial Emperor left his legacy here in the Glacial Temple, and he set it up so nobody above the condensed prime Warrior level could enter. The aim is to have young talents enter this labyrinth in the hopes that one of the youths are worthy enough to inherit his wisdom and wealth.” Pu Yuan rose his hoarse voice to make sure the message was clear, “My spirit can be freed once I find someone worthy to inherit his legacy; therefore, I am pretty excited to see you lot actually, Hahaha!”

“The Glacial Emperor’s legacy...”

Hearing what Pu Yuan said everyone became emotional and ecstatic. ‘If the Glacial Emperor’s servant are this strong even after his death, what kind of powerful treasures and martial secrets could the Emperor himself have left behind?’ Lin Zi Yan was trying to keep her cool while Jin Yan was shaking in euphoria.

“However! I am not just going to hand it over to you. All of you will be tested! My master’s legacy is to be earned, not given.” Pu Yuan’s voice reflected his old age, but it was also apparent that he was in a good mood. “Pay attention to this jade disc in front of you. This is one of the Seventy-two Interstellar Secrets’ twelve chapters. Back in the days the Emperor was obsessed with the writing on this very disc, and although it is not a complete chapter, he was able to create an incredible mystic stance from the sparks of inspiration he got from reading this writing about cultivating formulas.”

“And from there he developed his fighting style; an arsenal of powerful stances. This was how he undisputedly became the strongest cultivator of his era...”

“I haven’t been in the outside world for a while now, but I’d imagine all of you have heard stories about him...”

‘This has to be just the tip of the iceberg...’ Lin Zi Yan was shocked by what she was looking at. All the stories she had heard did not justify the scale of even a fraction of what the Glacial Emperor left behind.

Pu Yuan continued, “If the Glacial Emperor wanted worldly power, the Zhou dynasty would have ended long ago.”

Everyone in the hall was a citizen of the Zhou dynasty. From history lessons and stories they had learned how many forces worked together, and how many armies had to fight to establish the dynasty’s solid foundation. On one hand, they were shocked to hear that the authority they had grown up respecting could have been challenged by this fable figure. On the other, they were convinced that just being in this labyrinth was an eye opening experience. An experience that planted many new ideas and concepts about power, wealth, and runic stances.

To everyone in the temple, who had been close to losing their lives while exploring the Bloodmist labyrinth, the Emperor’s power and craftiness was too great to be compared with anything or anyone they knew; therefore, they were in awe of this artifact in front of them gave him power great enough to challenge the supreme authority of their time.

“Whether or not you can inherit the Emperor’s legacy is up to you now!” Pu Yuan said calmly. “You are looking at the test! If you can see what the Emperor saw between these lines and figure out just what kind of stance he acquired from this jade disc, you pass!”

“To figure out what the Glacial Emperor did back in the days?” After Pu Yuan revealed the subject of the test, everyone’s burning hearts were swiftly frozen. To figure out some runic secrets dreamed up by a person who was strong enough to challenge a whole nation was definitely an impossible task.

“I know what you are thinking, but when the Emperor gained enlightenment on his stances from these texts, he was just a Warrior. At first he only learned a Spirit stance from it, but this stance was refinable

and after years of reinventing and perfecting, the stance became no weaker than a Sky stance.

“Of course I don’t expect you to show me a Sky stance. If you can show me you’ve figured out the basic structure of the Emperor’s stance he invented from reading this disc, I will let you through to the next round!” Pu Yuan added as he squeezed out a gentle smile on his face in hopes that it would help calm the crowd down.

“What?!”

“Sky stance!?” Pu Yuan’s words shook the crowd causing everyone’s eyes to get even bigger.

Sky stances, were something only mentioned in legends. They were not mentioned once in the history records of Zhou dynasty’s thousand year reign.

Legends about Sky stances are like the stories about the three sages, conceptional and unproven. While some say they don’t exist, some cultivators firmly believe the Holy Conservatory existed and that people who reached that mythical realm do in fact have a chance to learn Sky stances.

“Go! What are you waiting for?” Pu Yuan waved his arm and the green and blue light pillars shone down and became numerous runic seats.

“You will only be able to clearly see the text on this jade disc while sitting on these, and keep in mind you only have three days. If I am not satisfied with your results I will send you out of this realm.” After leaving this message, Pu Yuan disappeared into the light pillar on top of the jade disc.

After a brief moment of silence, the crowd blew up.

“What? I don’t see anything meaningful on this jade disc at all! I don’t believe anything that geezer said, Sky stances are something made up in stories, and in these stories the stances are taught by sages in rainbow colored robes.”

“I have to admit, this Glacial Emperor character is very powerful, but

really? A Sky stance? Come on, What's next? We're all actually in a dream right now?"

"Zi Yan, do you believe him?" Ye Wei heard the crowd's speculation, but he needed help to digest all the information he had just been given.

Ye Wei was not a believer, but then he thought about the Mystic Mount presence in his Sentient and he started to realize that the stories he heard might actually be true. The sages, the mountain, at this point he felt like he was too opened minded to judge anything correctly.

"There is no harm to trying. If we can't get a Sky stance out of this then no harm, but if we get lucky and all this is true, we might get a share of what the Glacial Emperor left behind!" Lin Zi Yan too didn't quite know what to believe, her frown was slowly disappearing as she tried to calm Ye Wei down and figured out herself that she should not be frustrated over a great chance to maybe strengthen herself.

"We only need to show him a part of what the disc says. The test might be easier than we all assume it to be." She added.

"Yea you're right!" Ye Wei smiled and walked to one of the seats.

After long heated conversations, most of the cultivators decided to give it a try. But three days is too short a time for someone to learn a stance out of nowhere; realizing that had so little time they got their fat arses onto the seats as Pu Yuan instructed and started trying to decipher the disc in front of them.

Chapter 94: Supernova

The vast majority of cultivators weren't able to easily comprehend stances from texts; and the ideas, in this particular chapter of the "Seventy-two Interstellar Secrets," were intricate enough to inspire the Glacial Emperor to create an evolvable stance that could be upgraded to the Sky level. This complexity was the reason why a lot of these Warriors were positive that such a stance did not exist.

Having said that, comprehending stances was a much easier process than refining or creating a stance. However, for ordinary people understanding stances was still very difficult, but not for Runemasters – for the people who specialized in runes it was obviously easier.

Although Ye Wei was not yet a Runemaster, his soul sensitivity was very much comparable to one. With his knowledge and rune resonance on top of that, he could decipher things as well as a Runemaster could.

While everyone was seated, hopelessly struggling, Ye Wei's soul sensitivity let him decipher at the speed of a trained Runemaster.

'Seventy-two interstellar secrets – Dark Sky Chapter...' The moment Ye Wei deciphered some of the text a message from the jade disc resonated in his mind. The message exploded in his head, and numerous words and letters appeared before his eyes.

This text was written in an extinct language, and Ye Wei did not recognize the shapes, but somehow he was able to understand what the message meant.

'Above the heavens, the stars rotate. The magnificence of the galaxies nourish everything. The heavens can cover it but not contain it; the earth can contain it but not cover it. The universe can accommodate it but not refute it knowing that everything has its place and limitation... Heaven and earth turn and rotate as everything returns to the universe.'

As Ye Wei's mind was bombarded by ideas the ancient text bore, his face twitched. Despite this, he sat motionless on the seat seemingly calm, but there was a vague look of shock on his childish face.

‘Heaven and earth turn and rotate... everything returns to the universe... This means no matter how many times the stars reassembled themselves, the universe is constantly evolving while the suns and stars never really change...’

‘If Pu Yuan was indeed not lying about how these lines inspired a stance, I can totally see how that stance would become repeatedly refinable and could transform into a Sky stance, or an even stronger stance’ The concept was complex to the extreme. From the telepathic message he was able to glean some insight into the text, and bit by bit, Ye Wei could slowly understand it.

‘What does this name even mean? Supernova stance? By the looks of it, this stance’s first incarnation is, as Pu Yuan said, a Spirit stance. Judging by the Qi flow described in the text, anyone below the condensed prime Warrior level could make the best use of this stance, and it makes the user’s body three times stronger than normal for an hour!’

‘The second evolution of this stance seems to be the Myst level. The second stage works best on returned prime Warriors. It causes the user’s body to become six times stronger than normal, but it will only last half as long as the first evolution.’

‘The third evolution of the Supernova stance is an Earth stance that strengthens the user’s body nine times! It lasts for a good half hour, but god prime Warriors would not benefit from it. That’s the end of the written examples, but it looks to me like this stance can get even stronger through training and refinement!’ The text continued, but for now, Ye Wei was a bit too shocked to read anymore.

Amplifying stances were rumored to only be available to the Zhou dynasty’s royal family, but he was pretty sure he was reading the formula for one right now.

Now a seven-star Student, Ye Wei finally could learn stances, and if he were able to master the Supernova stance then even just its first form would make him three times stronger. That was enough to challenge ten-star Students!

When he does eventually become a ten-star Student, he would be able to challenge Warriors using this stance!

With triple power amplification any cultivator would easily dominate others in their own cultivation level and maybe even beat people levels above within the hour of the stance's effect.

Although the second and third evolution doesn't last as long, their six and nine times of amplification only made the stance's next stages even more terrifying.

'This is an incomplete entry level of Supernova stance. If I could somehow evolve it into a Sky stance...'

Just thinking about the stance's possibilities, Ye Wei's heartbeat quickened. 'It's a shame I can't explain what I've understood, or else I would surely share this powerful stance with my family.'

'If this one of twelve chapters then I can't imagine what kind of power the author of these volumes possessed! Nevermind that for now... the first incarnation should work well before I become a god's prime Warrior, which can take me decades to reach. For now, I should just worry about the task I've been given.'

'From what I can see, this Spirit stance is made up of one hundred and thirty-six runes. If I can figure out how to draw these runes, performing this stance should not be too hard.'

'It's only a hundred and thirty-six runes, it seems easy enough!' Ye Wei was pretty confident in himself. When it came to almost everything he was modest, but when it came to runes, he was starting to be comfortable with the idea that he had quite good comprehension towards them.

'The first rune should be drawn like this. Okay, now the second...' After pondering, Ye Wei started to write the runes.

'That's number eighty-one!' In just moments, he depicted and memorized eight-one runes every single twist and turn.

'Humm... Number eighty-two is a bit more complex!' He could feel the difficulty ramping up as he hit the eighty-first rune in the sequence.

‘Okay, this is it. Now number eighty-three...’ Ye Wei’s speed significantly slowed down, and the flow he had when he started deciphering them was also diminishing.

‘Hundred and eight!’ After six hours of hard work, he reached that number from the time he figured out the eighty-second rune. Ye Wei was far from satisfied with his speed.

When he was refining Triple Tidal Palm, White Tiger’s Assault, Triple Plunder Sword, and Driftwind steps he only needed to see the stance once before memorizing all the runes used, but this time he had to actually learn a lot of the runes. After six hours he felt like he understood less than when he started.

In fact, learning one hundred and eight amplification runes was a monumental feat to begin with. If any Runemaster heard that Ye Wei was not satisfied with his speed, they would be coughing blood in anger.

Like spatial runes and dimensional runes, amplification runes are also specialized runes. Ye Wei had yet to start learning about runes types with Master Yi. He had no way to know how hard deciphering texts such as this one was to others, not to mention the type of runes he was dealing with were extremely tricky.

The Mystic Mount’s presence in Ye Wei’s Sentient didn’t just improve Ye Wei’s soul sensitivity, but his cognitive abilities were also enhanced without him knowing. He should be the last person to complain about a pace others could only dream of having.

‘Twenty-eight more to go!’ Although Ye Wei was talented, six hours of non-stop deciphering took its toll on his body. He felt a little dizzy, so he opened his eyes and took a few deep breaths before switching his attention back to last twenty-eight complex runes.

‘Zi Yan, Jin Yan, Hong Xun, and Xue Yao are all talented individuals in their own right, I wonder how far they’ve reached.’ Sitting on the seat, Ye Wei tilted his head and glanced at the others as he rubbed his temple to relieve the slight headache that was bothering him.

‘These last runes are way more complex than all the runes before

them.’ Ye Wei thought. After a small break, Ye Wei clenched his fist and became more determined, ‘I’ve come this far, it’s do or die now!’

Ye Wei closed his eyes again, and the text and runes reappeared in his mind.

The last straw indeed proved to be the hardest part; the complexity of the runes made deciphering quite time-consuming and exhausting. Eighteen hours flew past, and when Ye Wei opened his eyes again, there was a subtle grin on his pale face.

‘That’s it! All one hundred and thirty-six runes of the Supernova stance’s first evolution are now in my head!’ Ye Wei didn’t expect that solving the last twenty-eight runes would take three times as long as solving the first hundred and eight!

After understanding the Supernova stance, Ye Wei started to look into why the stance only lasted for an hour. He wanted to know why upgrading the stance would shorten its effects.

‘Only one day has passed. What am I going to do with the two days remaining?’ Ye Wei wondered as he looked around.

‘Zi Yan is still deciphering, and I honestly have no idea when she will finish. I don’t want to waste two days doing nothing... I might as well try to refine the stance.’ Ye Wei pondered with his hand rubbing his chin. Seeing that Zi Yan was not done yet and how he had nobody to talk to, he turned back to the disc to read more about this interesting stance.

When everyone else was still trying to finish deciphering the disc, Ye Wei had already started to refine it! He enjoyed the process of refining stances more than deciphering them. He found the latter bland and boring which was the exact opposite of what he thought of the refining process; improving and perfecting were extremely satisfying and interesting for him.

“Zoom!”

As Ye Wei was about to start refining, the jade disc shot out a beam of blue light that enveloped him completely. A human figure appeared at

the other end of the beam.

The figure was illuminated by a layer of one hundred and thirty-six green runes covering its body! The Supernova stance was a completely different kind of mystic stance, and therefore to perform them required a different technique!

Chapter 95: Results

In normal circumstances, cultivators charge their fingers with will-force, and use that as a pen, their Qi as ink to write runes in the air. After they finished writing the rune sequences, they would inject Qi into it, activating the stance.

But with amplification stances, it's slightly different. The canvas would be the user's body instead of the air.

'If I want to refine this stance, I need to know its weaknesses!' Ye Wei thought as he focused on the human figure in the beam of light. He, deep in a thought, was mesmerized by the one hundred and thirty-six glowing green runes.

The few hundred Warriors sat on their seats in the spacious hall. They were all so focused on the task at hand that they did not feel three days worth of time pass.

"Buzz!"

All the pillars in the hall illuminated once again. Beams of light crossed over the large jade disc, and Pu Yuan reappeared on top of the dazzling artifact.

"Time's up!" Pu Yuan looked down on everyone as his thick, hoarse voice sounded in their ears, shaking and waking them up.

"What! That's all?" Everyone opened their eyes. Some looked sad and disappointed, some felt insecure, and only very few of them looked confident.

"This Supernova stance... out of the hundred and thirty-six runes, I've deciphered twelve in the three days. Thankfully Pu Yuan said we only needed to figure out the basics; I wonder if I did enough."

"I deciphered fifteen!"

"What a shame... I only figured eighteen runes out..."

The Warriors who had deciphered less than twenty runes knew their

chances were slim, and their eyes were a little teary after they heard that their time was up.

“I’ve only understood four runes, I have a feeling that isn’t good enough...”

“I don’t expect myself to pass this test; these runes are just too complicated. I couldn’t decipher even one rune...”

As for the people who couldn’t decipher more than ten runes, their heads were down but they were a bit less frustrated as they knew not passing the test was more or less a certainty.

Surrounded by low-spirited Warriors and not knowing how they were going to be assessed, Hong Xun and Xue Yao were also a little anxious. Both of them thought they did pretty well, but neither of them deciphered the whole stance.

“Hahaha! You guys think that was hard? It wasn’t that bad!” Jin Yan looked around him only to see that everyone seemed down and frustrated which only fueled his confidence by miles. ‘These untalented commoners are wearing their incompetence all over their faces!’

“Pfft, what are you so proud of? Maybe we did not do as well as you, but it doesn’t mean you’re going to pass the test either! Have you figured out the whole stance? Thought not! So shut up!” One of the more competitive Warriors spoke up.

Hong Xun didn’t want to engage in a pointless argument, but he agreed with the point that the Warrior was trying to make. ‘Jin Yan is really mouthy, isn’t he? None of these hundred and thirty-six runes were normal ones, and even Runemasters might not be able to decipher the whole stance in three days... Even if he did decipher more runes than us, as Pu Yuan said, we only needed to figure out the basics to pass this test. I think he should still be on course to fail the final test.’

“Ha! No, I haven’t figured out the whole stance, but you are looking at a genius who deciphered eighty-one runes! If I fail then, none of you stand a chance!” Jin Yan said proudly and loudly as he was sure that he was first.

“Jin Yan deciphered how many runes!?” All the cultivators gasped for air as they learned of Jin Yan’s achievement.

Although nobody really got along with Jin Yan due to his pride and arrogance, they couldn’t deny his strength and talent when it came to cultivation, his fame and his ranking in a major city.

Lin Zi Yan was sitting next to Ye Wei, and her sculpted eyebrows twitched. She opened her beautiful purple eyes, and there was a flash of disappointment present.

“Argh, I can’t finish this stance in the end.” Lin Zi Yan quivered disappointed in herself because she hated not achieving her goal.

Unlike Jin Yan, Lin Zi Yan preferred keeping a low profile, and even if she did pretty well herself, she was far from satisfied as she did not finish learning such a rare stance. ‘It’s a shame I couldn’t understand all of it. I thought I would be able to get more out of this trip.’

‘Eh? Is Little Wei still trying?’ Lin Zi Yan could see Ye Wei was still sitting peacefully by her side with his eyes closed.

‘Little Wei’s soul sensitivity is ridiculously strong. I still can’t believe he achieved the best score possible in the tests Master Yi gave him! If there is anyone here who can figure out this stance, it is surely him!’ Lin Zi Yan glared straight at Ye Wei with a purple glitter in her eyes. While she was a competitive person, she wished Ye Wei would be able to learn this exquisite technique.

Jin Yan’s eyes fell on Lin Zi Yan. Not that he was ready to lose against anyone, but in his mind she was his only competition in this test and it actually wouldn’t surprise him if she won.

“Present your results!” Pu Yuan looked around emotionlessly. Their emotions seemed to be fascinating for him.

Pu Yuan then waved his arm to summon a runic light pillar. “Zoom!” A human figure appeared in the middle of the light beam, and on the figure’s body there were one hundred and thirty-six dimly lit runes.

“Place your palm on this figure, the runes that you’ve deciphered will

light up on this figure's body." Pu Yuan pointed towards the light pillar and said.

"Mister, how many runes have to light up for us to pass?" Everyone was staring at the runic figure. One of the cultivators sighed and looked up at Pu Yuan to ask the question everyone wanted an answer for.

"If you pass, I will let you know!" The tone of Pu Yuan's hoarse voice revealed his excitement and expectation. He subconsciously looked at Ye Wei, partially interested as he didn't expect a Student to make it so far in this labyrinth, but mainly attracted by Ye Wei's mysterious aura.

'I wonder there is anyone worthy in this group. Three hundred years of being alone was not as enjoyable as I told myself it would be...' Pu Yuan looked out over the cultivators as he thought. His eyes turned watery as the sense of being abandoned overwhelmed him.

"I will go first!" Jin Yan could not wait to show off as he rushed towards the pillar of light. He carefully raised his hand then placed his palm on the figure.

"Buzz! Buzz!"

As Jin Yan's palm touched the figure, a mysterious surge of energy entered his body and went into his Sentient. Moments after eighty-one of the runes on the figure's body lit up. Those were the eighty-one runes he had deciphered.

"Eighty-one? That's not bad. Next!" Impressed by the result, Pu Yuan nodded radiating satisfaction. 'Eighty-one runes in three days? Give him enough time, and he can surely learn this stance.'

"Three!? Next!"

"Next!"

"Next!" One by one, all the Warriors joined the queue and got their results. Jin Yan was leading by eighty-one while Hong Xun and Xue Yao made seventy-two and seventy-five runes light up respectively.

By now, only Ye Wei and Lin Zi Yan were the only two unassessed

cultivators, and because they were both not too eager, they waited at the end of the line.

“Well... The eighty-first rune is a block. If you can decipher eighty-one runes in three days, then you have a chance to learn the whole stance. But for anyone who learned less, if you can't understand the Qi flow in the eighty-first runes in this amount of time, I'm afraid you probably don't have minds bright enough to master this stance even if you tried for your whole life.” Pu Yuan said solemnly.

Hearing Pu Yuan's words, Jin Yan's eyes flashed, but on the contrary, Hong Xun, Xue Yao, and the rest looked depressed by his words.

Knowing that he needed to go up and get assessed soon, Ye Wei opened his eyes from trying to refine the stance.

Seeing one after another scoring so low, Ye Wei was surprised. He didn't really find the process that difficult. He did find the later runes harder and more complicated, but he was able to use the earlier easier runes as a template to decipher the harder ones. ‘Why is everyone doing so bad? We had three days!’

If Jin Yan knew what Ye Wei was thinking right now, he would probably be coughing blood. He gave his best efforts just to get stuck a bit more than halfway through.

Pu Yuan smiled and spoke, “Considering the level of talent, you lot actually did pretty well. Back in the days when the Glacial Emperor was deciphering this stance, he figured out one hundred and eight runes in three days with his extraordinary talents in understanding cultivation and runes. It was half a year after that when he mastered the Supernova stance!”

“This mystic stance was the Emperor's foundation. He built his arsenal of stances from it, and if it wasn't for this stance he wouldn't have been half as strong as he was!” Pu Yuan was not even looking at the cultivators at this point; he was feeling nostalgic therefore he unconsciously closed his eyes.

“Oh, even the Emperor himself only deciphered one hundred and eight

runes in three days!” Jin Yan was feeling even more confident after hearing what Pu Yuan told everyone about the past.

“Like the eighty-first rune, rune one hundred and eight is also a block, and if you can understand the tricky Qi flow in these two runes quickly, you will have a much greater chance of successfully learning this stance” Pu Yuan continued.

“Next!”

Pu Yuan’s eyes fell on Lin Zi Yan and Ye Wei and thought, ‘It’s that Student kid! Oh wait, we only have two cultivators left? I don’t really like the cocky boy who deciphered eight-one runes, but I guess he is the best chance for my spirit to be set free.’

Chapter 96: Second

“The next best results were Hong Xun’s seventy-two and Xue Yao’s seventy-five. As confirmed by Pu Yuan, the eighty-first rune was a key-point. It did take me a day to get past it, but the fact that I did proved that I am on another level. If anyone should pass the test, it’s definitely going to be me!” Jin Yan pulled his shoulders back and stood tall; it was very hard for him to stay calm in this situation.

“I don’t care what family you’re from my result speaks for itself!” Jin Yan’s gaze made it obvious his message was directed to Lin Zi Yan. ‘The reason why I can decipher eighty-one runes in three days is because I have the talent to become a Runemaster. My master told me in a year or two I should be able to take the Runemaster entry exam!’

The fact that Jin Yan had the talent to become a Runemaster was a secret between him and his mysterious master. Even the Jin family was kept in the dark this whole time.

“Little Wei, how do you think you did?” Lin Zi Yan whispered in Ye Wei’s ears.

“Heh, not bad, but ladies first!” Ye Wei smiled confidently and shrugged.

“Ok!” Lin Zi Yan nodded and walked into the beam of light gracefully towards the figure.

‘It’s that girl!’ The cultivators’ eyes started to gather on Lin Zi Yan. Both her desirable strength and beauty caught quite a lot of attention earlier, and everyone was curious about how she did.

“Even Mo Ya couldn’t keep this girl under control! I think she’s actually stronger than Jin Yan!”

“I’d much rather this girl inherit the Glacial Emperor’s legacy than Jin Yan.” Nobody really liked Jin Yan, and seeing that no one else could match Jin Yan’s astonishing results, they all started to root for the girl with purple hair.

Jin Yan too, couldn’t take his eyes off Lin Zi Yan. She was the only

person in the hall who he felt threatened by. He didn't see Ye Wei as anything more than an annoying Student who got lucky in this treasure filled labyrinth.

Lin Zi Yan remained calm, and she didn't lose her cool even though everyone was looking and talking about her. She took a few light steps and raised her slender arm as she arrived in front of the figure.

"Buzz!"

After a brief moment of silence, the runes on the figure started lighting up one by one at her touch.

"One hundred and eight!"

Everyone was staring at the green lights on the figure feeling startled.

"One hundred and eight runes! That's ridiculous! That's way better than what Jin Yan did!" The news was hard to swallow and after the initial shock, everyone turned their heads to Jin Yan whose face ashened. They thought what Jin Yan displayed was pretty hard to match, but apparently not so if you were Lin Zi Yan.

"Oh my god... one hundred and eight? Back in the day, the Glacial Emperor did the same in three days!"

"Could this girl be as talented as the Glacial Emperor was?"

The way each of the cultivators looked at Lin Zi Yan was slightly different; there was envy, jealousy, fear, but there was a sense of reverence in everyone's eyes. They couldn't help but ask themselves, 'Will I live to see the rise of a legend?'.

"How is this possible?!" Stunned with disbelief, Jin Yan widened his eyes. He couldn't take them off the runic figure bathed in bright light.

'I have the talent to become a Runemaster, and I only deciphered eighty-one runes!'

Jin Yan, out of all the cultivators in the hall, was one of the people who knew how the complexity of the runes in Supernova stance only gets worse past the eighty-first rune. He struggled to believe that Lin Zi Yan

could decipher as many as one hundred and eight runes.

Pu Yuan's gaze fell upon Lin Zi Yan. He was excited at her talent that matched his late master's. His cloudy eyes cleared up and shone brightly.

"Not bad, not bad. You've passed the test!" Pu Yuan announced full of praise. He didn't think that after just three hundred years he would meet someone with so much potential.

The assessment was not yet over, but Pu Yuan was too excited to contain himself. Jin Yan took that as an insult because the remark Pu Yuan gave him was not as good.

"Next!" Pu Yuan looked at Ye Wei and said.

Ye Wei was the last in line!

"It's that boy's turn!" As Pu Yuan's voice sounded, all eyes were set on Ye Wei.

All of the cultivators saw what Ye Wei could do with runes, but they did not expect his result to exceed Lin Zi Yan's hundred and eight runes. Despite this, they certainly hoped he would do better than Jin Yan.

Ye Wei slowly got up and calmly walked towards the testing dummy under everyone's attention.

"Pfft, what can a mere Student do apart from making a fool of himself!" Jin Yan grunted coldly. Although Ye Wei was able to fight him a while back, he had been relying on scrolls, 'You need real strength and talent to decipher these runes!'

Ye Wei was the only Student in this group of Warriors, and in Jin Yan's eyes, he was just a rich brat who was showing off his scrolls, not a person worthy to be considered as competition.

While everyone was caught in their own desires and thoughts about the Glacial Emperor's legacy, Ye Wei was already standing in front of the figure rolling up his sleeves. He slowly extended his arm and placed his hand on it.

The second Ye Wei placed his hand on the figure, a surge of energy

rushed through his body into his Sentient.

“Buzz! Buzz!”

An outburst of rich blue runic light emptied everyone’s mind. Their eyes immediately narrowed, and although they were curious to see how Ye Wei did, it was impossible for them to tell how many runes lit up while they were half blind.

When everyone blinked hysterically and tried to clear their vision, a loud rumble sounded and echoed in the hall. The disturbance died down, and the blinding light shrunk forming a halo on top of the figure’s head.

“They are all lit up!” The bright light finally weakened, and everyone could see clearly that every single one of the hundred and thirty-six runes on the figure’s body was lit. All the cultivators minds stopped, they couldn’t think. After a few moments, they rubbed their eyes in disbelief and counted the runes again.

“There is no mistake... One hundred and thirty-six runes?!!”

“No. That’s not possible. Something is not right. How can all of them be lit? Even a qualified Runemaster could not be able to decipher this many special runes in just three days!”

“He’s just a student, how come he can do what even I failed to do...” Jin Yan widened his eyes while staring at the figure. Agitated by the blue light, his eyes were stuck on these runes while his face turned bright red and his veins started bulging.

Everyone wondered if they were dreaming.

Seeing the scene, Lin Zi Yan’s expressive eyes lit up, ‘His soul sensitivity can match Runemasters, and he has a supreme level of rune consonance in the end. Why did I even doubt him! Haha!’

‘One day you will stand on the top of the world...’ She looked at Ye Wei and gave him her best wishes.

“This boy has learned the Supernova stance...” Pu Yuan have met many powerful characters throughout his life and even after his life, but even

he was moved. 'It only took him three days... Master, it's a shame you're not alive to see this boy.'

"Kid, what's your nam..." When he was about to asked Ye Wei, something caught his attention and caused him to narrow his eyes.

Everyone followed Pu Yuan's eyes. They could see that Ye Wei's hand remained on the figure even though he had already shown he deciphered all one hundred and thirty-six runes.

Ye Wei's eyes were tightly shut, and his eyes twitched as he injected his will-force into the figure. His energy was like a large hand inside it, twisting and adjusting the runic array within!

The Qi flow in the figure was being altered as Ye Wei swapped the runes around, and the halo on top of its head brightened again. This time, it was a turquoise hue, and the bright light kept intensifying until it eventually enveloped both Ye Wei and the figure.

Another rumbling noise sounded, and the space above the figure darkened. Sparks of primal energy arranged themselves like star constellations and a couple of those sparks whizzed through the air like shooting stars.

The awe-inspiring micro universe captured the cultivators' attention. They felt naked as they were confronted by the mysterious cosmos.

"What is that?" Everyone raised their heads in shock.

Ye Wei slowly opened his eyes and pulled his hand away from the figure. "Finally!" Ye Wei was satisfied by the constellations and the two halos now floating over the figure.

Nobody could imagine that it only took Ye Wei one day to decipher the whole stance and that during the second and third day he was actually refining the Supernova stance. He had been stuck, but that was no longer the case after he was inspired by the residual Qi and will-force of the cultivators inside the figure.

Chapter 97: First Round Elimination

In the evening of the third day, with a little help from the other cultivators, Ye Wei was able to refine and transform the Supernova stance into its evolved state.

After Ye Wei's alteration, the number of runes in the figure reached three hundred and fifteen. Ye Wei was able to add one hundred and seventy-nine runes to the Supernova stance. The extra runes were recycled from the original one hundred and thirty-six, otherwise, it would have taken much longer for Ye Wei to figure out the second evolution of the Glacial Emperor's pride and joy.

After refining the stance, Ye Wei gained a great understanding of the runic system. He realized that if he wished to continue refining Supernova stance, he would need to create new runes from scratch.

Creating runes was conventionally only done by Grand Runemasters and was something Ye Wei or even Master Yi were not capable of doing yet.

"Three hundred and fifteen runes!?! This is unmistakably the second evolution of Supernova stance!" Pu Yuan's eyes widened, and he stared right at Ye Wei's childish face.

Centuries ago the Glacial Emperor spent three days deciphering one hundred and eight runes then hit a wall. He then took a break and spent time reading countless books and manuals before he could finish deciphering the Supernova stance. After that, it took him three years of using the stance in combat and testing it before he gained enough understanding to refine the stance to its second evolution.

'Three days... It took him three days...' Pu Yuan was struggling to find words to describe how he felt from the sea of expressions he had learned throughout centuries of his existence.

Accompanied by a thundering noise, a white pillar of light descended from the sky and enveloped Ye Wei.

A massive influx of energy surged into Ye Wei's body through his pores filling his body and rushing towards his dantian. His body shook from the heavenly energy he was receiving. Ye Wei felt a sacred presence from the other end of the white pillar of energy.

Ye Wei looked up, and he was able to see a dazzling structure far up in the sky. 'Where does the cosmic energy really come from?' He wondered.

Restored by the cosmic energy, Ye Wei's skin became crystal clear as all his impure energy was expelled from his body. His muscles were strengthened and his skin became tougher while his bones became denser.

He felt his soul being purified which gave him a transcendent sensation. It was rumored that cosmic energy increased a cultivators chance of defeating their inner demons when they cultivate and eventually hit their ten-star barrier.

Ye Wei hurried and guided the energy into his meridians, purifying it and guiding it to his dantian. The cosmic energy was then diluted and stored as Qi. Its purity was beyond compare with any other kind of energy.

There were only a few Students who were capable of refining stances in the history of cultivation and Ye Wei was one of the youngest on that list.

For a Student, the after effects of being purified by cosmic energy was as much as taking hundreds of Silver Moon pills. The energy surge was seemingly never ending, and it pushed Ye Wei's dantian and meridians to their limits.

As his body strengthened and his Sentient and dantian enlarged, the cosmic energy transformed Ye Wei into an eight-star Student.

But even the diluted energy was quickly stored inside his dantian. Energy from the heavens did not stop flooding into his body, and he was continuously becoming stronger even after the breakthrough.

'Nine-star!' Ye Wei could feel that he broke through again. But even after that, cosmic energy just kept pouring down. Not all the energy was

taken in by Ye Wei, as he was not strong enough to absorb it efficiently, some of it spread out onto Lin Zi Yan, Hong Xun, and Xue Yao who stood close by.

‘This amount of cosmic energy is incredible. It can’t be compared with the time when he refined the Triple Tidal Palm with me.’ Lin Zi Yan was shocked as her body was bombarded by the energy overflowing from Ye Wei.

‘This stance was created and refined before little Wei was even born. How could he trigger the cosmic energy if that was the case?’ Lin Zi Yan started to consider the possibilities but couldn’t quite nail down what caused this phenomenon to occur. ‘Could this be...’

At this moment, Ye Wei was absorbing the cosmic energy like a whale swallowing water. He continuously took in the energy and filtered it until it was pure enough to be stored in his body. Eventually, all his meridians were filled to the brim with Qi, and his dantian was not able to take in any more so instead his meridians widened to contain this vast surge of energy. The expansion of his meridians pushed his body to breakthrough again.

His body kept becoming stronger and stronger until finally, the surge started to slow down right before his body was on the verge of becoming a Warrior. In the end, Ye Wei hadn’t trained much after his recent breakthroughs, and he was too weak. He wasted too much of the cosmic energy to breakthrough again.

The immense energy shook Ye Wei’s footing and knocked him down to the floor. He climbed back up and sat in the lotus position. He could feel his body was changed and that now he was very close to becoming a Warrior. Surprisingly, he couldn’t feel any side effects from breaking through so quickly; he didn’t feel fatigued nor did he feel nauseous.

Thinking back, Ye Wei remembered he could vaguely see a bit of movement towards the other end of the light pillar. ‘What is on the other side? What is the source of this energy...’ He couldn’t help but pause and question what he saw.

But knowing that he had more important things to deal with, Ye Wei quickly dismissed his thought and continued focusing on consolidating what he just gained to avoid wasting the energy further. In the end, it was a rare occurrence for one to be purified by cosmic energy.

If Ye Wei were to receive cosmic energy again, it would be very possible for him to breakthrough to the Warrior rank! He clenched his fist tightly. For him learning the Supernova stance purged his fear of not being able to use stances. 'Looks like I will be able to cultivate quicker than others now that I can use and refine stances!'

'But to be able to refine a stance first I will have to understand it fully just like I did with the Supernova stance.'

Seeing that Ye Wei was able to refine the stance and received cosmic energy, Pu Yuan laughed while saying, "The Supernova stance is a very special stance; not only is it evolvable, it's also customizable so to speak. The evolved stages of this stance are different for each user, and strictly speaking, you are actually creating a new stance every time you refine it. Therefore it is entirely possible that you will receive cosmic energy every time the stance is refined." Pu Yuan explained.

'I wonder if this boy's Supernova stance will become as strong as master's... Either way, I guess I can say that I did not waste three hundred years now that I met this kid!!' Pu Yuan stared at Ye Wei as his eyes were heating up. 'He is definitely the most qualified person here to become master's successor. I am glad someone this talented showed up after all these unworthy people came and failed...'

'However...' Pu Yuan exhaled slowly and calmed his excitement. He frowned as he remembered what was written on his master's will.

"Master said whoever deciphered eighty-one runes would be qualified to take the next test!" Pu Yuan looked at Ye Wei, Lin Zi Yan, and Jin Yan. But he frowned and felt uneasy, if he did not swear to follow his master's will, he would have directly chosen Ye Wei as the only candidate to inherit the Glacial Emperor's legacy.

"As stated from his will, whoever deciphers more than eighty-one runes

of the Supernova stance shall inherit everything, and in the case where there is more than one person who meets the requirement, a second test shall be held..." Pu Yuan announced.

"What are your names?" He pointed at the cultivators who qualified and asked.

"Jin Yan!"

"Mister Pu Yuan, my name is Lin Zi Yan."

"I am Ye Wei."

'All three of them passed the test, but this Ye Wei is by far the best suited to become the temple's next master.' Pu Yuan sighed. In his opinion, although Lin Zi Yan and Jin Yan did pretty well on the test they were not even close to Ye Wei's level.

'But I have to follow master's will to the letter!'

"The test is over. All three of you have passed." Pu Yuan waved his hand, and three pillars of blue light fell onto Ye Wei, Lin Zi Yan, and Jin Yan.

"What, that's it? Only three of us passed?" Hong Xun, Xue Yao, and the others felt deflated as they looked at the chosen three, but on the other hand, they understood the distance between them and the trio was quite vast.

The Glacial Emperor was a legend. Literally, everyone in the room wanted to inherit his legacy. This was a once in a lifetime chance, and most of the cultivators were feeling pretty down because they had failed.

"Congrats!" After a few sighs and sobs, Hong Xun, and Xue Yao overcame the negative emotions. They were glad that at least there was still a chance that Jin Yan would be eliminated, so they walked up to Ye Wei and Lin Zi Yan and shook their hands.

"Thank you so much!" Ye Wei answered smilingly.

Just after Ye Wei showed his gratitude, some of the Warriors were starting to disappear. They were teleported out of the labyrinth by Pu

Yuan.

In mere moments, there were only about thirty Warriors left in the temple. Xue Yao and Hong Xun were confused, so they looked at each other, ‘Huh? Why haven’t we been teleported out?’

“Little ones!” Pu Yuan’s hoarse voice sounded.

“Eh?” Hearing his voice, everyone raised their heads and looked towards him.

“Although the rest of you did not pass the test, suffice it to say, you guys are talented enough to have deciphered a respectable portion of the Supernova stance!” Pu Yuan smiled as he relayed the good news. “Back in the day, master had eight close servants including myself. We are his disciples, and all seven of my comrades made their names famous in different corners of the continent while I was left behind to guard this temple!”

“I can not let you inherit the Glacial Emperor’s legacy, but to reward your efforts I would like you to meet his other disciples and see if you can learn something from my old friends’ descendants!” Pu Yuan waved his arm and seven jade amulets appeared out of thin air as they quietly levitated above the Warriors’ heads.

“There is a runic teleport array inside each of these amulets. Activating them will transfer you to the owners of the other halves of these amulets.

“The legacy of the Emperor’s disciples!?” The Warriors looked at the amulets and the fire in their eyes was relit.

‘Of course, it would be nice to inherit what the emperor left for the world, but from what I can see the emperor’s servants are stronger than their titles sound. I can definitely learn something that will make me someone strong!’

Chapter 98: Breakthrough

While everyone's eyes were set on the levitating amulets, there was a dimensional disturbance in the temple and a human figure appeared in the middle of the hall.

The intruder wore a blue robe and carried an ancient sword behind his back. He exuded a lavish vibe, and he brought with him a great Qi disturbance.

As he appeared in the hall, everyone could feel his fearsome presence that quickened the Warriors' heartbeats and made their bodies shiver.

It was none but Mo Ya!

The pressure he gave off now was a few times stronger than when he fought Lin Zi Yan!

"Condensed prime Warrior!" Everyone was shocked by Mo Ya's unexpected appearance. They gasped for air, and their eyes were filled with respect. They all thought Mo Ya had left the labyrinth. Not only did they not expect to see Mo Ya, but they also couldn't believe that he had broken through to become a condensed prime Warrior.

Lin Zi Yan frowned slightly. She knew for a fact that Mo Ya would soon breakthrough with the help of the pill, but it was quite surprising that he did it in just three days.

"Mo Ya!"

Jin Yan's face changed when he looked at Mo Ya whose presence was now a few times stronger than himself.

"This guy broke through and became a condensed prime Warrior!" Ye Wei's frown tightened. Before Mo Ya broke through he could stand fearlessly in front of Mo Ya while relying on his scrolls but now...

Facing a condensed prime Warrior who was carrying a three-star medium-grade mystic arm, Ye Wei no longer stood a chance even with all the scrolls in his possession.

In the end, the stances in his scrolls only contained low-level Myst stances!

“Mister, would you be the Glacial Emperor or perhaps the guardian of this temple? I would like to know about the Emperor’s legacy.” Mo Ya stood up straight ignoring everyone’s stares and glares. He greeted Pu Yuan and asked politely.

Mo Ya kind of regretted his decision. He felt like he had missed out on something as he could feel that everyone in the hall had grown a little stronger, especially Ye Wei, Lin Zi Yan, Hong Xun, and Xue Yao.

“Ha! That’s direct, what a shame that master said only cultivators below the condensed prime level could become a candidate to compete for what he left behind.” Pu Yuan glared at Mo Ya and shook his head.

‘Humm... the Bloodmist stance should have kept anyone above the condensed prime level out of the labyrinth, this kid must have advanced to the condensed prime level inside the premises!’

“How about his eight disciples? Did they leave something behind too? Correct me if I am wrong... Or seven shall I say?” Mo Ya’s cunning eyes were set on Pu Yuan for a moment and then he switched his focus to the seven floating amulets.

“You are looking at them.” Pu Yuan answered lightly.

“Thank you mister!”

Mo Ya bowed to Pu Yuan. ‘If I can’t get what the emperor left behind, I will at least be able to inherit his disciples’ skills and treasures!’

Mo Ya threw his sleeve out and created an invisible Qi cyclone that flew right towards the amulets. He wanted all seven of them!

“Stop!” A few of the cultivators shouted angrily, ‘You didn’t even take part in the test! I don’t care how strong you are; you can’t just shamelessly walk in and do whatever you want!’

“Mister, these are not a part of what the emperor left behind, right?” Mo Ya stared at the Warriors who stood between him and the amulets. “Are

there rules about fighting in this temple?” He asked politely then switched his attention to Lin Zi Yan, Ye Wei, and Jin Yan who were shrouded in blue pillars of light.

“No, they are not, and no master did not make any rules about fighting...” Pu Yuan gasped. ‘Maybe I’ve said too much.’ He frowned and looked down at Mo Ya. ‘This cheeky kid...’

“No rules against fighting, huh?” Mo Ya’s lips curled to a wicked angle as he slowly walked towards Jin Yan.

“I alway thought highly of Burning Gold!” Mo Ya stood right in front of Jin Yan asked with a smile on his face as he stared at the spear.

“Are you serious?” Jin Yan looked at Mo Ya with fear in his eyes while he clenched tightly onto the spear in his hand.

“Do you like your spear or life more?” Mo Ya smiled cruelly again and asked in a playful tone.

Mo Ya’s action stunned everyone. They couldn’t believe Mo Ya was after Jin Yan’s medium-grade mystic arm.

“Funny, I plan on keeping both!” Jin Yan’s pupil dilated and he chuckled, “Do you have the guts to do it Mo Ya? Just because you’re a condensed prime Warrior doesn’t mean you can just do whatever you want!”

Jin Yan didn’t think Mo Ya would actually fight him. The Jin family was as powerful as the Mo’s. If Mo Ya started a fight, it really would trigger a war between the families that had good relationship for decades.

Mo Ya would very possibly get punished by breaking the peace!

“Haha, if we were outside then no; you are your daddy’s boy! He would do anything to kill me if he knew I did something to you, but you are aware where we are now, right? What is going to happen here will forever be a secret if I want it to be!” Mo Ya couldn’t stop laughing. Everyone could tell he thirsted for blood from his tone and how he glanced around.

“I obviously couldn’t leave any witnesses behind!” Mo Ya stared at Lin Zi Yan, Ye Wei, and then at the rest of the Warriors. His cold voice

sounded again, “So I’m afraid none of you can get out of here alive. If I don’t get what the emperor left behind, no one will! There are plenty other Mo’s I can send here after I go home with all your treasures!”

As Mo Ya’s voice echoed through the temple everyone’s faces became pale, and their bodies tightened. All eyes were looking at him cautiously.

“Ha! Mo Ya, stop being so reckless. I’ve passed the test to become the emperor’s successor! I don’t think Pu Yuan will let you touch a hair on our heads!” Jin Yan’s eyes twitched as he looked towards the spectral guardian.

Nobody in the temple wanted to fight because they were no match for Mo Ya, not together and certainly not alone. Their last hope was that Pu Yuan would intervene!

“I’m afraid he’s your problem, not mine.” Pu Yuan shook his head and said coldly.

After hearing what Pu Yuan’s words, Jin Yan’s face darkened.

“Hahaha! That is some wishful thinking!” Mo Ya laughed hysterically and said, “Where is your dad now?!”

Mo Ya raised his head and looked at Pu Yuan. With the sensitivity of a condensed prime Warrior he was the only one who noticed the absence of Pu Yuan’s own Qi. Which made it safe for him to assume that this enormous spectral guardian could only act according to the Glacial Emperor’s orders. This meant that if he didn’t break any rules, there was absolutely nothing Pu Yuan could do to him.

Pu Yuan sighed, showing deep resentment in his eyes.

“Then we will just have to rely on ourselves!” Ye Wei quickly took out his medium-grade scrolls and tried to come up with a countermeasure.

“Mo Ya, you have just broken through! I don’t think you should be this cocky!” Jin Yan shouted then pointed his spear at Mo Ya.

Lin Zi Yan’s eyes turned bright purple, and her body flooded with power that was hidden in her blood. In mere moments, she became as powerful

as a peak ten-star Warrior.

She then took a step forward to stand beside Ye Wei.

Hong Xun, Xue Yao, and the other Warriors stared at Mo Ya with determination in their eyes then unwillingly stepped closer to Jin Yan. They knew what they had to do to survive.

“Tzzze!”

The sound of a torn scroll and the glow of mystic arms filled the temple. It wasn't long before runes and stances were flying towards Mo Ya.

Nobody held anything back; they wanted to finish the fight before anyone got hurt by Mo Ya.

The stances created strong currents in the sealed hall. Robes were flowing in the air and hair became messy as the air inside the temple raged intensely.

“Get him!” Jin Yan grunted as his dense Qi went from his dantian into his spear thus activating the stance inside.

“Septet Incinerating Strikes!” His spear shone brightly as the low-level Myst stance burst forth.

Jin Yan thrust his spear forward and seven golden Qi spears closely followed, each aimed at the spots of Mo Ya's body.

‘Purple Lotus Finger Strike!’ Lin Zi Yan groaned and put all her strength into her right hand. Her purple hair flowed in the air as she approached Mo Ya. A violet runic flame appeared around her hand and turned into a lotus shape.

The runic flower carried a fearsome presence!

Lin Zi Yan then flicked her finger, and the runic lotus became a flash, quickly flowing towards Mo Ya.

“Green Lotus Sword Dance!”

“Golden Bell!”

Xue Yao and Hong Xun used their best stances and the petal blades and

spinning runic bell followed Lin Zi Yan's lotus' path towards the newly broken through condensed prime Warrior.

"Darkmoon Tiger Strike!"

"Raging Bull Palm!"

"Raining Swords!"

Over thirty Warriors used their scrolls and arms in hopes that it would neutralize Mo Ya.

"Do you really think this child's play can stop me? Who do you think I am? Let me show you what I can do now." Mo Ya laughed hysterically. His vision was blocked by bright runic light, but he just looked at the stances with a disdainful gaze; his eyes twitched then his body absorbed the surrounding primal energy.

The roar of a dragon sounded in the temple as Mo Ya's sword was no longer on his back but in his hand. He did not need to move much to activate his stance. A mountain-like enormous green sword appeared in the air and crashed down towards the Warriors.

"Bang!"

The green sword destroyed everything in its path. All the stances it touched turned to dust, and although there were more than thirty Warriors, Mo Ya proved to be stronger than anyone imagined.

Although Mo Ya had just broke through, his foundation was stronger than most Warriors, so even without much training and learning how to handle his newfound power, he was able to take full advantage of it. With a three-star medium-grade mystic arm in his hand, his sword strike was no weaker than a mid-level Myst stance!

Chapter 99: Stars

It didn't take long before most of the Warriors' stances were destroyed and turned into a small mist of scattered primal energy.

Only Xue Yao's lotus swords, Hong Xun's golden bell, Jin Yan's spear, and Lin Zi Yan's purple lotus were still intact to contend with the enormous green sword. "What a joke!" Mo Ya sneered disdainfully while looking at what was left of the coordinated attack as he laughed arrogantly behind his Qi sword.

"Zoom! Zoom!"

Mo Ya grunted, and the Qi sword started vibrating. Beams of green light burst out as their pressure wave spread to fill the hall.

"Bang! Bang! Bang! Bang!"

First, the green ripples connected to Xue Yao's stance, and all of the petal swords shook then shattered with an intense cracking noise.

Shorty after, Mo Ya's stance crashed onto the spinning bell and Jin Yan's spear simultaneously. Both shattered immediately upon contact. Only moments after, Mo Ya struck Lin Zi Yan's stance; the only thing between the Warriors and a violent death.

If Lin Zi Yan's lotus broke now, the Qi sword would be on course to slice every cultivator in the temple.

"D*mn it!" Ye Wei ground his teeth as he tore two medium-grade scrolls in a row, but the weakened, ordinary low-level Myst stances did nothing to Mo Ya's fierce sword.

Lin Zi Yan's front teeth tightly clenched into her lip as she channeled more of her Qi to sustain the purple lotus which was showing signs of fracturing under the impact of Mo Ya's incredibly powerful strike.

The force of Mo Ya's sword seemed never ending. The pulsating pressure waves repeatedly impacted Lin Zi Yan's lotus stance, and the recoil force was making her paler by the second as a thin trail of blood flowed down her mouth.

Although Lin Zi Yan's bloodline meant her Qi was as dense and powerful as if she were a ten-star Warrior, her two-star Warrior body had no way to keep up with Mo Ya's newfound power. In a prolonged fight, her body couldn't hold up to the body strength of a condensed prime Warrior.

"Little Wei, run!" Lin Zi Yan used her voice transmission technique to warn Ye Wei in the noisy hall.

Ye Wei shook his head. When everyone used their scrolls and arms, he already took out the iron talisman as his backup plan. It had been absorbing a lot of residual Qi as all the stances were shattered by the might of Mo Ya's attack; unfortunately, only thirty-seven grooves on the talisman were currently lit up. It was not even halfway ready to be used again.

'Hang in there; it shouldn't take much longer!'

It was none of Mo Ya's concern that everyone wanted more time; that they wanted to live longer. They were only souls to be crushed in his eyes, and his Qi sword kept crashing down mercilessly.

'Hey, kid!'

A hoarse voice echoed inside Ye Wei's head.

'Mister is that you?! Can you help us?' Ye Wei raised his head to see Pu Yuan was winking at him in the blue light, so he replied.

'I am just a spectral guardian,' Pu Yuan shook his head reluctantly at Ye Wei and directly sent the message into Ye Wei's mind. 'I can only act upon someone who has broken the rules my master laid down when he put the seal on my soul...'

'However,' Pu Yuan paused for a second. 'I can't do much to him but you can!'" His calm voice sounded in Ye Wei's mind again.

'Me?' Ye Wei looked back and frowned.

'Little man, I want you to remember the power you felt from the revolving cosmos!' Pu Yuan's words echoed in Ye Wei's head.

Ye Wei was puzzled. 'Huh? I only just deciphered the Supernova stance, and I am just a ten-star Student right now. Even if I managed to use it perfectly, it would be no stronger than a low-level Myst stance... That's not going to do much to Mo Ya!'

While Ye Wei was still confused by Pu Yuan's cryptic message, the illuminating figure moved. It turned into a flash and flew towards Ye Wei so quick that it couldn't be seen by the human eye.

"Bang!"

Before Ye Wei even noticed, the shining figure invaded his body.

'What is this feeling...' All he felt was a dense surge of energy throughout his entire body.

Ye Wei lowered his head and looked at his clenched fists in disbelief. He could tell that the energy inside him was slowly evolving, and there was shock and excitement in his widened eyes.

"Crack! Crack!"

Lin Zi Yan was exhausted. Her Qi was quickly draining, and she could no longer hold her stance together. With a loud rumble, the purple flower was split into two by the green sword's sharp edge.

"Brumm!"

As the purple lotus was torn, there was nothing now between the Warriors and the sword but empty space, as the unstoppable crushing force approached them mercilessly.

Lin Zi Yan stood in front of everyone else to push her stance forwards towards Mo Ya, and now she would be the first to be hit by Autumn Grace's power because of her positioning.

Mo Ya's Qi sword brought with it a whirlwind causing Lin Zi Yan's robe to flutter and her hair to scatter in the breeze. She sighed as her life flashed before her eyes.

Her parents, her family, her childhood... She could remember all the tiny details of her life. Of how her mother used to braid her hair... Ye Wei

also appeared in her mind. How the shy boy brainlessly entered her training room, how they held hands and took a walk towards the setting sun at South Star Academy. She was happy that he was one of the last things she thought about.

“Get behind me! I will not let him touch a hair on your head while I am still breathing.” A familiar voice sounded in her ears as she gently turned her head to see that Ye Wei’s determined eyes were only a few inches away from hers.

Ye Wei grabbed Lin Yan’s waist and dragged her behind him right before the sword was going to land on her head.

‘Power of the cosmos...’

Primal energy condensed into nebula shapes around Ye Wei’s body, and the Qi within him was arranging into constellation patterns as the surge of energy began to rotate and flow. His meridians continuously compressed then expanded his Qi forming it into a raw explosive energy only found from the birth of stars.

After merging with the figure, Ye Wei’s body was strengthened, and the power of his Supernova stance overflowed as he threw his fist towards the large Qi sword.

“Bang!”

The moment Ye Wei’s fist hit the sword a thundering rumble filled the hall and two visible, conical waves of recoiling force exploded from the point of impact.

Everyone raised their heads and turned from Lin Zi Yan to the source of the explosion. They were shocked to see Ye Wei’s silhouette blocking what they thought would end their lives.

The Qi sword was over thirty meters long, yet Ye Wei, with his average build, was standing under it, somehow holding it firmly. It seemed that the sharp edge was not able to cut through.

“How, How is this possible?!” Jin Yan couldn’t quite figure out how a mere Student could hold Mo Ya’s sword in place. He knew he couldn’t

take on Mo Ya alone even before the breakthrough.

“This is...” Hong Xun, Xue You, and the rest of the Warriors widened their eyes and looked at Ye Wei with shock.

None of them could understand how Ye Wei overcame the cultivation deficit between them to go against this green sword everyone feared.

“Little Wei!” Lin Zi Yan was stunned. She noticed Ye Wei was fighting without a scroll in his hand, which even if he did would take more than a medium-grade scroll to fight Mo Ya.

“What is this madness?” Mo Ya frowned. He never thought Ye Wei, the boy who he didn’t even notice before today could so easily make his first fight as a condensed prime Warrior difficult.

“Crack! Crack!”

The green blade suddenly emitted a cracking sound seemingly caused by Ye Wei’s fist, as the cloud of Qi around it thickened and formed a shape of nebula-like clouds.

Under the pressure the green sword started breaking, and from the middle of Ye Wei’s fist numerous fractures ran along the blade to the pommel and to the sword tip, then suddenly it shattered with a deafening sound.

Seeing the Qi sword shattered, Ye Wei quickly rushed towards Mo Ya leaving a blur in the air after disappearing.

“How is this possible?!” Mo Ya’s laughing face froze with unconcealed shock. He thought Ye Wei had used a scroll or a mystic arm to temporarily stop his stance but was not so sure now.

“You deserve death!”

Ye Wei reappeared in front of Mo Ya in a flash. ‘You disgusting, treacherous waste of a human life!’ Ye Wei said while coldly staring into Mo Ya’s shocked eyes.

“You...”

Mo Ya stared at Ye Wei in disbelief. Before he could finish his sentence,

a blinding blue light in the shape of a fist appeared in front of him. He immediately lifted his sword to his chest with the reflex and speed of a condensed prime Warrior; he attempted to defend himself against the fist's deadly momentum.

Ye Wei's fist left a trail in the air like a shooting star, and it created a bell-like sound as it landed on the sword. The fearsome force crashed right through Mo Ya sending him flying like a stringless kite towards the jade disc.

“Bang!”

A rusty sweet taste filled Mo Ya's mouth as he realized it with his own blood.

“That is an incredibly powerful stance...” Mo Ya thought while looking at Ye Wei with incomprehensible surprise and horror. ‘How can a Student possess such power?!’

‘Is this the power of Supernova stance's amplifying effect!?’ Ye Wei looked down at his hands in shock; he could not believe how heavy his tiny fist hit.

After Ye Wei was granted the figure's energy from Pu Yuan, his strength could match a peak ten-star Warrior, and with the Supernova stance his strength tripled!

With that kind of power, it was not a surprise that he could knock Mo Ya down even through his sword!

‘I had the strength to strike down a condensed prime Warrior from just the basic form of the Supernova stance...’ Ye Wei started to understand what Pu Yuan meant.

‘So this is the power of the cosmos... Now let me try the second evolution of this stance.’ Ye Wei narrowed his eyes and redistributed his will-force to three hundred and fifteen different places around his body. He was enjoying the feeling of powerful energy slowly flowing through his veins..

As Ye Wei changed the runic array in his body, the constellation

patterns rotated, expanded, and brightened and two halos appeared over the top of his head emitting a fierce pressure wave.

Chapter 100: Karma Tower

“Boom!”

The moment the halos appeared, Ye Wei's robe fluttered and a heart-stopping energy wave burst forth from his body.

Impacted by his energy the air around Ye Wei rippled. Green and blue rings of pressure waves appeared and expanded outwards. He calmly stood at the center, seeming unfazed by the changes. From a distance Ye Wei looked like a godly figure; he looked as if there was no one in the world who could stop him.

The temple was suddenly filled with a soulshaking sense of terror. The aggressive Qi was not directed to anyone specific, but still all the cultivators, including Jin Yan who was a peak level ten-star Warrior, began to shiver as their faces turned as pale as the moon.

“How can this kid be so powerful...” Jin Yan mumbled as he looked at Ye Wei with fear. The last time he had felt this kind of power was when his grandfather got mad and killed a group of thieves who tried to empty their family vault in the dark of the night.

Jin Yan's grandfather was one of the three elders of the Jin family, a six-star condensed prime Warrior!

“I think I understand...” Lin Zi Yan mumbled while looking at the halos on Ye Wei's head. She could sense the Qi flow inside Ye Wei, which caused her to raise her head and look at Pu Yuan who was shrouded in a pillar of light.

‘Pu Yuan knew little Wei had refined the Supernova stance so he gave him the power of a Warrior! With such amplification effect it was not really a surprise that little Wei was able to fight against Mo Ya.’

Lin Zi Yan then thought about how Ye Wei selflessly jumped in front of her and the words he said still lingered in her heart.

“No, this is not possible!” Mo Ya never imagined that the power of a six-star condensed prime Warrior would come out of a Student's body. He

panicked and quickly sketched the rune sequence in the air of his best stance hoping to finish off Ye Wei once and for all.

Ye Wei moved, and before Mo Ya could react, his fists already landed. With the force of the stars and suns Ye Wei's punches rained down on Mo Ya.

“Crack! Crack!”

A blood-chilling noise of shattering echoed in the temple. In mere seconds over three hundred punches broke every bone in Mo Ya's body and tore through his organs.

Ye Wei delivered another strike, and this time his punch landed on Mo Ya's dantian shattering it.

Mo Ya's body was shot out and heavily smacked against the jade disc. Silence descended on the hall when Ye Wei pulled back his fist which pinned Mo Ya against the disc, and his body slid down slowly leaving a long trail of blood on the artifact's surface.

Everyone in the hall was staring at Mo Ya who was laying on the floor like a dead dog, and they all held their breath. None of them could believe just how strong Ye Wei had become all of a sudden!

‘What did he use now?!’

Mo Ya was in need of immediate medical attention without which he would surely die, but nobody in the temple sympathized with him. After all if it wasn't for Ye Wei, Mo Ya would have killed them all. Having been hit by attacks like that, Mo Ya cultivation was completely destroyed, and there was little chance that he could rebuild the strength of his body even if he did survive.

“You can let him die, but not in here. This is a sacred place, and there has already been enough bloodshed.” Pu Yuan started ordering the cultivators to move Mo Ya's body out of the temple. He then turned to look at Ye Wei. ‘That was a close one; it was disrespectful to master that this boy with the sword tried to kill others in here. Can we call it karma that he fell to master's stance? Haha...’

Moments after the fight, Pu Yuan retrieved the illuminating figure from Ye Wei, and the Supernova stance's effect fell off while the cultivators were cleaning up the temple.

After experiencing the amplifying effects, Ye Wei gained a great understanding of the Supernova stance, and he couldn't wait to train again. 'Once I become a Warrior I will be as strong as cousin Zhong when I use this stance!'

"As I stated earlier, you three have deciphered eighty-one runes or more, I will decide who is going to inherit master's legacy after you've taken the second test!" Pu Yuan pointed at Ye Wei, Lin Zi Yan, and Jin Yan.

Lin Zi Yan glanced at Ye Wei. She was not really concerned with whether or not she would pass the test. Once she reached the condensed prime Warrior level her family had many formulas and stances ready for her. Although they might not be as powerful as what the emperor left behind she would be able to choose a cultivating path that suited her the best with consultation from the elders of her family. On the other hand, Ye Wei didn't have access to powerful cultivating paths so this was a very good opportunity.

The main reason Lin Zi Yan wanted to continue with the test was to help Ye Wei overcome the challenges and at the least be there to support him mentally.

"I'll see you on the other side!" Pu Yuan waved his arm causing all three participants of the second test to disappear from the temple hall.

"As for you lot," He spoke while looking at Hong Xun, Xue Yao, and the other Warriors. "I wish you the best of luck with the seven disciples' legacy. Sadly, I can not do much more at this point."

Pu Yuan's voice echoed throughout the hall. He then glared at the amulets before his figure faded.

"What is this place?"

Ye Wei, Lin Zi Yan, and Jin Yan reappeared in a formless empty realm. They were surrounded by darkness and none of them could see a thing.

“Soul Prison!” Pu Yuan answered as his figure appeared in the darkness and slowly walked towards the trio. The green and blue hue around him brightened the realm and starlight burst forth under his feet with every step he took.

By the time Pu Yuan reached them the dark realm was already lit by starlight. All three of them felt like they were floating in a miniature star system.

‘Soul Prison?’ Ye Wei, Lin Zi Yan, and Jin Yan all frowned staring at Pu Yuan, visibly confused.

“And there is where the next test will be held!”

Pu Yuan pointed at one of the bright stars far away. The twinkling stars in the void suddenly brightened up and there was an invisible force pulling them close to each other. The conglomerations merged together and formed an ancient tower right before the confused trio’s eyes.

The tower was three stories tall. It’s facade was covered with glittering stars that were held together by billions of flowing runes.

‘This is the Karma Tower,’ Pu Yuan gazed upon the starry tower from a distance as his voice sounded in the trio’s heads.

“There are inner demons locked in this tower. There are three stories in total. Master sealed demons in each story whose power increases each time you advance higher and higher. Their levels are respectively low-level, mid-level, and high-level demons.”

“How does one trap inner demons?” Ye Wei, Lin Zi Yan, and Jin Yan were shocked to hear Pu Yuan’s introduction, and they all stared at the tower with awe.

It’s was a known fact that the minds of cultivators would be invaded by inner demons. More precisely, low-level inner demons when Students breakthrough to become Warriors; mid-level inner demons when Warriors breakthrough to become condensed prime Warriors, and lastly high-level inner demons when condensed prime Warriors breakthrough to become returned-prime Warriors.

If a cultivator can't deal with their inner demons, they will never successfully overcome a major breakthrough.

Inner demons are something one cannot touch or see. None of the three knew these illusive demons could be captured.

"In this world, nothing is impossible. If one is strong enough, one can achieve anything. Although master did not exactly seal them there with his strength, but..."

"Building this tower was not without its cost. Master had to sacrifice something he held dear, but I guess he thought the possibility to nurture the younger generation meant more to him." Pu Yuan said while gazing sadly past the trio seemingly looking into the past.

After a moment, he regained his senses and said, "You all know that if one falls to their inner demons during a major breakthrough, it will take more than two years for their bodies to recover?" Pu Yuan continued. "But if you're in the Karma tower, the runic array will teleport you out if it can sense that your meridians are under extreme stress."

"Wha..."

Jin Yan gasped as Pu Yuan's words made him realize the value of this tower; his eyes burned intensely as he stared at it. He had been a peak ten-star Warrior for more than six months now and his body was ready to breakthrough but his mind wasn't. He was afraid that he would be crushed by his inner demons.

If that happened, Jin Yan wouldn't be a condensed prime Warrior for at least two years.

But inside this tower he could fight his demons without any fear of hurting his cultivation base if he failed. With this experience, It would make the actual breakthrough much easier.

"You two. Since you are both Warriors and you have fought low-level inner demons in the past, you will be placed in the second story!"

"All I can tell you is that, the longer you last in the tower, the more likely I will pick you to be the successor. There is no downside to this, and

this experience you gain will make your next major breakthrough easier!” Pu Yuan looked the two Warriors in the eye and said sincerely.

“As for him. he is just a Student. His test will take place on the first story.” Pu Yuan said while looking at Ye Wei.

“So that’s it! Do your best! Ah, and good luck!” Pu Yuan smiled at all three of them and his eyes stopped on Ye Wei’s tiny body, ‘He only used three days to evolve the Supernova stance. I certainly hope his mind is as strong as it is smart.’

‘This boy might even be stronger than master when he learns master’s secrets.’ Although Pu Yuan had high hopes for Ye Wei and actually wanted him to be Glacial Emperor’s successor, he would still follow the rules and let the test’s result decide the inheritor.

‘Little Wei, this will be a rough ride, but it will all be fine if you don’t lose yourself.’ Lin Zi Yan used the voice transmission technique to advise Ye Wei.

‘Yeah!’ Ye Wei nodded and looked up, time froze as their sights crossed

“I hope you are ready!” Pu Yuan smiled to the trio and waved his arm. Three pillars of light covered them and they simultaneously teleported into the tower.

Ye Wei appeared on the first story of the tower as countless runes in the chamber came alive and flowed around him.

Chapter 101: Second Chamber

“Wooosh!”

A cold wind tickled Ye Wei’s cheek as he carefully looked around but it was useless as inner demons couldn’t be seen, touched, or even sensed.

But Ye Wei knew that it was close by.

Ye Wei was not yet a Warrior; therefore, he had not come across inner demons before. He had absolutely no idea how to defeat them or how to defend against them. He had no experience at all.

Ye Wei could only cautiously stay on guard.

“Argghhhh!”

While Ye Wei was carefully waiting for something to happen, an unbearable, soul shaking pain struck him.

This pain was not physical; this was a wound to the soul! There was a limit to physical pain. It stopped worsening when one’s body turned numb. But this kind of pain of one’s soul was far worse. It seemed as if there would be no end!

Ye Wei’s eyeballs seemed to almost pop out, and blood vessels around his face were almost bursting. His face was completely red, and the muscles unconsciously twisted and twitched; his handsome face became a hideous mask.

The veins on his forehead and neck were strained, and some of his capillaries had already burst causing his forehead and face to be covered in blood. He looked as scary as a devil.

“No! Hold on. I have to hold on!” Ye Wei tightly ground his teeth as his consciousness started to become blurry.

At this moment what Lin Zi Yan said earlier echoed in Ye Wei’s mind. ‘Little Wei, this will be a rough ride, but it will all be fine if you don’t lose yourself!’

‘Yeah, I can’t lose myself!’ Ye Wei’s eyes shone with determination and

stubbornness. He was aware that if he gave in he would spiral out of control and would never get out of this abyss of pain.

Ye Wei guessed that inner demons would be scary, but never could he have imagined them to be this fearsome. They struck without warning. There was no way to defend against it, and there was no escape. One could only take it as it comes.

“Boom! Boom! Boom!!”

The fearsome, agonizing pain was like a tide hitting Ye Wei’s consciousness over and over again. A tide that sought to drown Ye Wei’s consciousness, but Ye Wei ground his teeth not losing himself.

Two hours, four hours, six hours!

These six hours felt much longer than three years for Ye Wei.

‘No matter how much pain my body and soul is feeling, I just can’t give up! With my heart, I shall master the way of the universe; with my heart, I will calm my mind. I will cultivate my mind and control my heart with my mind!’ Everything he learned continuously flowed into Ye Wei’s Sentient, and in the Sentient a golden light twinkled like starlight.

The distractions his mind generated from the pain faded, and now Ye Wei felt euphoric; he felt how his soul was purified, refined.

In the end, Ye Wei was still young, and he hadn’t experienced too much; therefore, his mind was relatively pure compared to adults. This made it easier for Ye Wei to defend against his inner demons.

The pain weakened and eventually faded into nothingness.

“It’s finally over!” When the pain disappeared, Ye Wei’s soul shook. He felt utterly exhausted, and he fell to the floor sitting down.

“Boom!!”

Right as he sat down an explosive noise sounded through the entire realm he was in, and a white pillar of light suddenly fell from the sky onto Ye Wei.

A surge of thick, dense energy with an awe-inspiring presence rushed

into his body. The energy flowed around him nourishing everything. Ye Wei's muscles, bones, and organs strengthened at an extremely fearsome speed as his body transformed!

Seated on the ground, Ye Wei looked completely dumbfounded, and shortly after a glint of surprise flashed through his eyes.

Before stepping into the first floor of the Karma Tower, Ye Wei's cultivation was already at the peak ten-star Student level, and he was qualified to attempt a breakthrough in every way.

Now that Ye Wei had successfully defended himself against the inner demons' invasion, and because his cultivation level was sufficient, his body started transforming.

When the strength of Ye Wei's body was at its limit, the vast cosmic energy rushed into his dantian crazily expanding its space.

"Warrior level!" Ye Wei could feel his cultivational breakthrough, and the power of the next level brought him delight.

When Ye Wei became a seven-star Student, his dantian was as big as nine-star students' dantian. After he refined the Supernova stance and brought it to the second evolution, cosmic energy descended and Ye Wei's cultivation shot up to the ten-star Student level making his dantian even bigger than it had been.

At this point, Ye Wei's dantian was already at a Student's limit almost as big as a Warrior's.

And now that Ye Wei had reached the Warrior level, after being purified by cosmic energy, the size of his dantian multiplied again.

After just moments, Ye Wei's dantian doubled in size.

When cultivators breakthrough to the Warrior level their dantians would double in size. Because Ye Wei's foundation was too good, his dantian was now three times bigger than a normal one-star Warrior's; it was almost as big as three-star Warrior's dantian.

The bigger a cultivator's dantian was, the more Qi it could hold and the

more powerful their stances would be.

Zoom, zoom, zoom!

Ye Wei's Sentient started expanding after his dantian enlarged. His Sentient was as strong as a Warrior's after absorbing the Blood Devourer crystals' energy, and after the breakthrough, his Sentient had the strength of a three-star Warrior!

Ye Wei now had the ability to fight a three-star Warrior, if it was only a short fight! Sadly, the strength of his body was not enough to contest a three-star Warrior, and apart from the amplification Supernova stance, Ye Wei did not know any other stances, and the one stance he knew he used it with help from Pu Yuan.

Body strength was not enough to decide the winner when the cultivators reached the Warrior level. A fight between two of the same level would be about how skillfully they used their stances.

"So this is the Warrior level?" Ye Wei slowly stood up. His eyes were shining brightly, and he slightly clenched his fist. He could feel how much his body had grown. He could feel a large amount of Qi rushing through his body. He knew that he was now multiple times stronger than he had ever been before.

'After I stepped inside this Bloodmist Labyrinth, I've been very lucky. All of these experiences improved my cultivation by miles. When I get out of here, I have to learn and study all the stances I can get my hands on.' Ye Wei thought as he looked forward to sharing the good news with his friends and family.

Not long after his breakthrough, a greenish blue light enveloped Ye Wei, and he could feel the dimension he was in distorting. When he opened his eyes again, he was standing on the second story of the Karma Tower.

The first story of the Karma Tower was build for Students, and now that he had become a Warrior the runes in the tower teleported him to the second story.

Ye Wei stayed on the first level of the tower for more than six hours, and when he was teleported to the second story Jin Yan and Lin Zi Yan were long gone. They had been teleported out of the tower while Ye Wei was breaking through.

Jin Yan stayed on the second story for four hours until he couldn't hold out any longer.

Lin Zi Yan lasted a bit longer than Jin Yan, but she had also stayed there for four hours. In the end, she was only a two-star Warrior, and it was a bit of a reach to overcome mid-level inner demons with her cultivation level; however, although she did not overcome the challenge she learned a valuable lesson. With this experience, she should not have as much trouble while breaking through like other cultivators would.

'It's been six hours...' In the darkness, Jin Yan was gazing straight at the twinkling tower and frowned.

He had been the first to be teleported out of the tower. There was no way he would obtain the Glacial Emperor's legacy, and he felt lost after getting so close. It was understandable how down and angry he felt, but with this experience, he was confident he would become a condensed prime Warrior on his next attempt to breakthrough.

Lin Zi Yan was the second person to be teleported out of the tower. As of now, Ye Wei was the only person left in the tower, and there was no doubt that he would become the Glacial Emperor's successor!

During the first test, not only did Ye Wei deciphered the basic Supernova stance, but he was also able to refine it into its second evolution!

And in the second test, he was the contestant who lasted the longest.

'That kid was sent to the first story of the tower to fight low-level inner demons, in what way is that impressive? He just has to endure some pain! When I was a Student, I defended myself against low-level demons without any problem!' Even though Ye Wei had stayed in the tower for

longer than he did, Jin Yan was still not able to admit defeat.

‘Before entering the tower little Wei’s cultivation was already at the ten-star Student level, he should be ready to breakthrough to become a Warrior. Now that six hours have passed, he should have already defeated his inner demons to become a Warrior...’ Lin Zi Yan thought while looking at the tower from a distance. Her eyes were soft, and she felt happy for Ye Wei from the bottom of her heart.

“The boy has just entered the second story!” Pu Yuan certainly did not expect this development causing him to narrow his eyes while he stared at the middle of the tower.

“What? That kid is on the second level?!” Jin Yan’s voice broke, “He is just a Student, how is it possible for him to enter the second floor?”

“Obviously, if he defended himself against the low-level inner demons, he can of course advance to the second floor!” Pu Yuan stated calmly while watching the tower from afar. Ye Wei had surprised him greatly.

‘There is a lot of luck and help involved, but little Wei is getting stronger very quickly. He is now a Warrior, and if he keeps advancing like this he should be able to catch up with those people...’ Lin Zi Yan pondered in her heart as she looked in the tower’s direction but her focus was far beyond.

“Mid-level inner demons are nothing to be joked about. The more experience little Wei can obtain now, the easier he will breakthrough to the condense prime Warrior level when that day comes. I wonder how long he can last.” Lin Zi Yan mumbled as she nervously paced around.

“A mere Student won’t be able to do much on the second floor; he will be kicked out in no time!” Jin Yan grunted angrily. His eyes were narrowed as he spoke to himself with an envious tone. ‘I came so bloody close!’

‘He used three days to decipher the Supernova stance and refined it in the process; now he went through a major breakthrough in the Karma Tower... Master, I wish you were here to see this!’ Thought Pu Yuan.

Pu Yuan, Lin Zi Yan, and Jin Yan stared into the darkness. All were

slightly anxious to see how Ye Wei would do for different reasons.

Ye Wei appeared right in the middle of a large chamber on the tower's second story. The runes in this chamber were far more complex than the ones below it, and they came alive the second Ye Wei's feet touched the floor.

'The mid-level demons on the second story is completely different to what's on the first floor,' Pu Yuan chuckled, he was happy that he could hand Ye Wei what his master left behind and was excited to see what kind of future this young genius would forge.

Chapter 102: Temptation

‘Bring it on!’ Ye Wei stood steadily in the hall, determination shone in his eyes. Having experienced it once, Ye Wei was not as nervous as when he first encountered his inner demons six hours ago.

Ye Wei learned that they had no shape, no shadow, can’t be touched, and can’t be felt. ‘Rather than being submissive and anxious, I should just be open to it!’

“Bang!” A gust of cold wind howled through the chamber rushing in like a rising tide. Ye Wei’s body shook, and his vision faded as his consciousness blurred.

A beautiful girl’s face appeared in front of Ye Wei. She was wearing a semi-transparent chiffon robe, and her big watery eyes were looking straight at him, “Mister!” The beautiful voice of this sensual figure woke him.

The stunning young lady looked at Ye Wei with an alluring, soul capturing gaze as she gracefully walked towards him. She brushed her collarbone with her slender hand, and her chiffon robe started to slide down her shoulder. She had her arms across her chest covering the bottom half of her perky breasts. Her radiant skin made her sultry display that much more alluring.

“Mister, I feel really hot!” The young lady said while not taking her charming eyes off Ye Wei. She lifted her hand and placed a finger on her lip. She chuckled and licked her fingertip with her perfect tongue, then she ran her wet finger down her neck and flicked the robe off her other shoulder.

Her seductive body was now bare in front of Ye Wei, and her look was as if she was gazing right through his soul.

She wrapped her hand around his neck, moved her head closer, “Mister do you not like me?” She panted through her cherry lips.

The young lady’s facial features were exquisite, and her appearance

greatly resembled Lin Zi Yan in quite a lot of ways.

However, she was more forward and seductive. No man could resist her charm. At his age, Ye Wei was currently going through puberty, and it was nearly impossible for him to think straight because of what he was seeing.

Feeling the touch of her soft, wet fingertips on his neck, Ye Wei slowly lost control of himself and his eyes quickly started roaming around.

All of a sudden something flashed through Ye Wei's mind which caused his body to shake and cleared his mind a little.

'With my heart, I shall master the way of the universe; with my heart, I will calm my mind. I will cultivate my mind and control my heart with my mind!' Ye Wei repeated the ancient teachings in his head. What small bit of sanity told him that everything was just an illusion; that the girl in front of him was a demon.

Inner demons were not actually from within one's body, but they had the ability to weaken their preys' minds by manipulating their thoughts. The one he was facing now was able to identify Lin Zi Yan as Ye Wei's weak spot when it invaded his mind.

Ye Wei clearly understood that if he were to lose his mind here, the test would be over.

He ground his teeth and channeled his Qi to protect himself.

Of course, when Ye Wei's tried to push the girl away, he was surprised to notice his Qi was absorbed when she touched him.

Inner demons are formless!

"Mister, I really like you!" The girl's arm softened and locked down on Ye Wei's upper body like a snake, and with him held firmly she drew closer. She put her soft body against Ye Wei's chest, and his breathing turned heavy. He could smell the girl's heavenly fragrance.

No attack was going to work; Ye Wei could not fight back. He only had a small bit of reason left in his mind to hold on to, a small voice in his head

that constantly told him that everything was not real. That everything he was seeing and feeling was illusory.

Even though Ye Wei knew she was the inner demon, he couldn't control himself. His breathing became heavy as he felt the girl's hand grabbing him tighter and tighter.

If this went on, Ye Wei's mind would overload. Even though he was in the Karma Tower, and if he did lose his last shred of rationality and gave in then the runic arrays would save him. But Ye Wei was stubborn and did not want to give up. 'This experience will be very valuable in the long run. It is an excellent opportunity to train my mind for when I have to go through a major breakthrough again. Then it will be much easier...'

'Control my heart with my mind...'

Ye Wei ground his teeth and tried to keep conscious the best he could to suppress his impulses and many impure thoughts. Chances to train one's mind like this were too rare, he had to take advantage of it now.

But as stubborn as Ye Wei was, his eyes were becoming cloudier. He was on the verge of breaking down.

'The most fearsome enemy in this world... is myself!'

"Zoom! Zoom!"

Inside Ye Wei's Sentient runes shone golden as the Mystic Mount's presence appeared. Needless to say, inner demons are fundamentally evil; therefore, the girl was stunned by the unexpected surge of energy.

'She is sugar coated poison and is not real!' Ye Wei's mind cleared up, and he opened his eyes. There was a golden glow in his pupils which helped replace the feelings of intoxication in his mind.

'Evil is born from one's heart. It is just a concept; if one's mind is calm as a mirror, evil will cease to exist!' Teachings of the monks echoed and shielded Ye Wei's mind from the inner demon's seduction. He pushed the girl away and sat down in the lotus position like a meditating monk as he radiated a golden aura.

The sacred words kept ringing in Ye Wei's head, and the demon's voice quieted down when his mind became calm, but when he was distracted it would turn as loud as thunder.

"Am I not good enough for you mister? I have a few sisters if you insist I will bring them here so we can please you..." The young lady was leaning over Ye Wei while she bit his earlobe and whispered alluringly in his ear.

"Mister!"

"Mister!"

Hot bodied, pure and graceful, petite... Seven other girls appeared out of nowhere, and they called out to Ye Wei in moaning voices as they ran over to him.

The kind of beauty these eight girls possessed was extremely rare. A man would be hard pressed to find just one, but now there were seven more in front of Ye Wei.

They surrounded Ye Wei, and engaged themselves in an intimate merrymaking session, but Ye Wei was not moved. The presence in his mind shielded him from any distractions.

Two hours, four hours... Seven hours had passed! The eight girls tortured Ye Wei incessantly with their appearance, but he was protected by a grand presence, and the girls could not make him give in to his desires.

'I see! All of us are descendants of the sages in one way or another. We all have the potential to overcome the evil intents in our minds, and that's the mindset each of us needs before we can make mankind great again...' Ye Wei thought as he slowly opened his eyes. Seven hours of mental torture had pushed him deeper into his own mind and caused him to think more than he ever had before. Now his soul was as clear as a diamond, and his eyes were no longer cloudy.

There was nothing for the demon to take hold of and use, Ye Wei's mind at that moment was impenetrable.

"Pop! Pop! Pop!"

All eight girls disappeared like exploding bubbles.

Ye Wei saw and was positively surprised that he had defeated the inner demon, but he stayed cautious in case there were any challenges left.

“Zoom! Zoom! Zoom!”

The runes on the chamber walls flowed and rotated, and a beam of blue light was cast upon Ye Wei. The tower’s teleportation array activated once again, moving Ye Wei to the tower’s top story.

‘On the third story was the high-level demon master captured when he was breaking through to become a condensed prime Warrior.’ Pu Yuan was just curious, but Jin Yan and Lin Zi Yan were getting restless. They couldn’t stop pacing around and looking towards the tower.

“Are you certain that he will be teleported out if it becomes too dangerous?” Lin Zi Yan frowned and asked full of worry wondering why Ye Wei had been in the tower for so long.

It’s been seven hours since she heard Pu Yuan report Ye Wei’s progress, and she was aware what mid-level inner demons could do to a cultivator’s mind. ‘Maybe he just became a Warrior, but it takes much more than strength to deal with inner demons...’

“It has been over three hundred years since the Glacial Emperor built this tower, are you sure its runic arrays are working correctly?” Jin Yan narrowed his eyes while he looked at Pu Yuan.

‘I am a peak ten-star Warrior, and I was only able to stay on the second floor for two hours, Ye Wei just broke through to become a Warrior, there is no way his mind is stronger than mine!’

‘Seven hours... really? If the runic array isn’t working, he would definitely be trapped in the illusions created by the demons. That’s the only thing I can think of!’

“This tower will stay standing long after you have died and your name has been forgotten. Three centuries? Master’s work can last for at least

three millennia! Hahaha!” Pu Yuan answered. “If Ye Wei’s body falls to the inner demons, the tower will send him back out. Do not worry.”

All of a sudden Pu Yuan narrowed his eyes, “He is on the third story!” it was getting hard to believe, but it was a fact. He could feel that Ye Wei had advanced.

“What?!”

Both Lin Zi Yan and Jin Yan gazed upon Pu Yuan in disbelief, wondering if they heard correctly.

‘I wonder how he managed it. This boy is extraordinary!’ Being the Glacial Emperor’s disciple meant that Pu Yuan himself was something of a powerful cultivator and that he had met countless talents in his time, but none of those encounters brought him the shock he got from this boy Ye Wei.

‘If Ye Wei becomes as strong as master was, he might even be able to revive me in twenty or thirty years...’ Pu Yuan thought and decided to nurture Ye Wei anyway he could.

Ye Wei appeared on the third story, and he was immediately surrounded by a gust of cold wind. His vision blurred and a black mist swallowed him whole.

“What is this? This feels different.” Ye Wei’s face turned pale as he saw a figure approaching. He could feel its cold hand reaching for his throat.

The killing intent and the bloodthirsty presence was drowning Ye Wei; he could barely breathe because of the thick, bloody aura emanating from the inner demon.

Images started appearing in Ye Wei’s head of various demons, monster, and wild beasts fighting savagely against the human race. The boundless fear consumed Ye Wei, and his consciousness faded quickly...

Chapter 103: Four Chambers

The runic array in the tower was activated, and a bright blue light dispersed the black mist and then engulfed Ye Wei causing him to be directly teleported out of the tower.

When a cultivator attempts a breakthrough they are entirely focused on their body, therefore, their mind become weak. When a condensed prime Warrior attempts to breakthrough, it takes one's complete focus to control the Qi flow in the specific circulation pattern that is required. This is the perfect time for demons that feast on fear and resentment to attack and as such inner demons came to thrive on cultivators' negative emotions.

It is a condensed prime Warriors' duty to fight demons, beasts, and other threats to mankind. Having to face fear day in and day out forges their minds, and even then these fearless cultivators would struggle when facing high-level inner demons. It was already a miracle that Ye Wei could defend himself against mid-level inner demons, but Ye Wei trying to deal with what was on the third floor, now that was simply not going to happen.

'That was terrifying...' The moment Ye Wei exited the tower, he regained consciousness but was still shivering from the fear he felt.

"Little Wei!" Lin Zi Yan immediately leaped to his side once he appeared. "Are you okay?"

"I'm fine, Don't worry about me, Zi Yan." Ye Wei smiled and shook his head as a warm feeling filled his heart.

For Ye Wei, overcoming pain and desire proved to be an easier task than conquering physical fear. He would have easily lost his life if he encountered it anywhere other than the Karma Tower.

"This kid..." Seeing that Ye Wei was fine from a distance, Jin Yan's eyes shone jealousy. His feelings were complicated as he felt both respect and fear for Ye Wei.

Ye Wei was moments from being declared the victor, and Jin Yan was overwhelmed by envy and reluctance, but there was absolutely nothing he could do. ‘Even if I use everything I have and fight him, I will not be able to accomplish anything, just look at Mo Ya...’

“Master would be glad to have a successor like you!” Pu Yuan said while looking at Ye Wei. Pu Yuan looked content and even his wrinkles looked like they were smiling he was so happy. ‘He lived a glorified and happy life, but I know his only regret was not having a successor he deemed worthy; he was just too nice to tell us that.’

‘But none of that matters now!’ Pu Yuan looked solemnly at the three. “The second test is over. I guess I don’t need to tell you the results?”

“Yeah!” Lin Zi Yan nodded joyfully. She expected Ye Wei to finish first in the deciphering test; however, she was very worried when she learned that they would face their inner demons for the second assessment.

“Yes...” Jin Yan had an ungrateful look on his face while he glared at Ye Wei. He grunted and nodded. ‘I deserved to win! But he just deserved it more, I guess...’

“Despite not being first, you two have come far. Master did say that I should honor whoever could pass the first test with a handsome reward!” Pu Yuan smiled and said, “You can choose from a high-level Mystic stance, six-star medium-grade mystic arm, or ten Frozen Heaven pills.”

Pu Yuan waved his arm as three globes of blue light appeared in the air.

“Reward? But I didn’t pass the test...” Jin Yan mumbled. The bitterness in his eyes cleared up as he stared at the rewards floating in front of him.

All three treasures Pu Yuan casually took out were peerless, but to the Glacial Emperor, it was more important to strengthen the younger generations. They weren’t much considering the countless amount of treasure the Glacial Emperor had. Being the strongest cultivator of his era naturally meant he had rare and priceless treasures.

‘Humm... Lin Zi Yan lasted longer in the tower, and she has more potential than Jin Yan...’ Pu Yuan looked to the side at Lin Zi Yan. “You

there, little girl. You get to pick first.”

Jin Yan tightly clenched his fists. He looked at Lin Zi Yan nervously as he was afraid that she would take the Myst stance from him. If he were able to add a high-level Myst stance to the Jin family’s collection then the elders would view him favorably.

‘A stance, a mystic arm, and pills...’ Lin Zi Yan’s eyes lingered on the rewards as she frowned and hesitated.

In the whole of Green Moon City, only the City Lord, Master Yi, and South Star Academy had access to high-level Myst stances. Their rarity and value were undeniable, but that was not the case for Lin Zi Yan given her background. The high-level Myst stances and mystic arm were an attractive choice, but also because Lin Zi Yan’s Sentient was strong, she would be able to translate just one Frozen Heaven pill into two or even three minor breakthroughs. Knowing that all her choices were good it took her time to decide.

‘What would benefit me the most?’ She asked herself. “May I have the pills, please?” She made the decision after a brief moment of pondering.

Pu Yuan nodded and pointed to one of the blue globes causing the ball of light to fly towards her.

“Thank you mister Pu!” Lin Zi Yan grabbed the bottle and happily put it in her bag.

“I would like the Myst stance formula please!” Jin Yan was happy that Lin Zi Yan made that decision, and after a brief consideration he unwillingly took his eyes off the mystic arm and turned his focus to the jade inscription.

‘This weapon is very powerful, but it will not directly contribute to my cultivation and my strength as a Warrior... With the experience I gained I will shortly become a condensed prime Warrior then I can learn the stance myself before offering it to the Patriarch...’

“Sure.” Pu Yuan nodded, and he sent the jade inscription Jin Yan’s way then took back the weapon.

“This next part does not concern the two of you so... ” He said while looking at Lin Zi Yan and Jin Yan. He slowly pointed at them, as two beams of light came out of his fingertip. The two were then each enveloped in a green ball of runes.

“I will wait for you outside!” Lin Zi Yan smiled and winked at Ye Wei.

“Okay.” Ye Wei nodded heavily.

Jin Yan stared at Ye Wei with a jealous gaze behind the blue light.

“Whoosh! Whoosh!”

The runic balls of light brightened and then Jin Yan and Lin Zi Yan’s silhouettes slowly faded.

“I will bring you to the main hall.”

Light flashed around Ye Wei as he was teleported back to the temple.

“This is the main hall?” Ye Wei was shocked to see the hall was even larger than where the first test was held, and that this ceiling was too high to comprehend. In the middle of the hall there was a large cyan seat that was essentially a huge cloud of runes. He looked around and noticed there was a corridor on each side of the hall that had a kilometer tall ceilings.

‘These are not just any runes!’ Ye Wei thought while looking at the runes flowing on the cyan seat. He could not recognize any of them.

“Try sitting on it!” Pu Yuan said.

“Yea!” Ye Wei nodded. He was happy to get approval as he had been curious about the seat ever since he set his eyes on it.

He stepped forward and got on the seat without a second thought. ‘This is so comfortable.’ Ye Wei could feel that his mind was clearer and working quicker than usual.

“This cyan seat enhances one’s mind. It makes deciphering runes and stances a much easier task. Master created three out of his four best stances right here.” Pu Yuan smiled and said.

“Do you see the corridors?” Pu Yuan pointed and said slowly, “Each of them leads to a chamber. The one to your left is the runic chamber!”

“Runic chamber?” Ye Wei’s eyes followed Pu Yuan’s finger to the hallway; he could see that it was filled with white mist, and he could also see an ancient stone door at the end.

“There are thirteen thousand six hundred mystic runes sealed in this chamber. All of them are specialized runes. Most are runes master collected himself from all over the world while the rest he created himself.”

“Thirteen thousand six hundred runes?” Ye Wei’s eyes widened, ‘If they really were specialized runes this collection was worth cities!’

“In my opinion, only stances made from specialized runes are real stances. The power of normal runes are quite lacking. Master was very proud of this rune collection!” Pu Yuan said proudly as his chest slightly rose.

“The second hallway leads to the treasure chamber. There you can find mystic arms, scrolls, pills, herbs... You name it; you should be able to find it there!”

“The third chamber is the stance chamber. This is a collection of over ten thousand stances. They range from Spirit stances to even Earth stances; also master’s four strongest stances I mentioned before are there too.”

“And the last one is the puppet chamber...” Pu Yuan briefly introduced each of the chambers.

Ye Wei was frozen in awe. He didn’t know all of this would become his when he entered the labyrinth.

“Haha, all of this is now yours, or shall I say could become yours...” Pu Yuan said.

“What do you mean?”

“You are the new master of the temple, but the things here you

currently do not own; they are items you will have to earn!”

Chapter 104: Home

“You have to understand, master left all of these priceless treasures behind, but his wish is for you to get stronger and not to rely on them.” Pu Yuan could see Ye Wei was confused, so he kept explaining. “If you want to get access to everything stored in the temple there is only one way, to become stronger. Certain parts of the Glacial Emperor’s legacy won’t be unlocked until you’ve reached a certain cultivation level.”

“There are entrances to three different secret realms and also many other priceless artifacts in this hall, but you won’t be able to acquire them until you are strong enough to use them.”

“Now that you are a Warrior, you can have access to one of these chambers, and you get to decide which of them it will be.” Pu Yuan smiled at Ye Wei. “My advice is to pick what you think would help you the most to develop yourself as a cultivator.”

“Yes.” Ye Wei nodded respectfully.

Pu Yuan was glad to see how humble Ye Wei was acting, “So which of the halls do you wish to access?”

Ye Wei was startled by the suddenness of the question, and he frowned while thinking deeply. ‘What can I use those runes for? I don’t have sufficient experience to create my own stances anyway...’

‘As for the treasure hall... I’ve collected a fair bit since I entered the labyrinth. I don’t really have a use for these things currently. With my cultivation level, I wouldn’t be able to use the rarer items either.’

‘On the other hand, it bothers me that I’m already a Warrior, but I hardly know any stances! However, I do know Supernova stance in a sense, and its first stage is only made up of one hundred and thirty-six special runes. It will take some time to correctly optimize it.’

After thinking for a moment, Ye Wei lifted his head and humbly asked, “Can you please give me some advice?” He was aware that Pu Yuan was once the Glacial Emperor’s disciple and therefore would have much

better insight into cultivating than himself.

“You comprehended the Supernova stance and even refined and evolved it, but your body isn’t strong enough to use it without help...” Pu Yuan could understand Ye Wei’s frustration.

“Yeah!” Ye Wei nodded. Earlier when he fought Mo Ya, he felt the overwhelming power of Supernova stance but without Pu Yuan’s help, he wouldn’t have been able to successfully unleash this stance.

“You already know the Supernova stance is an amplification stance and using such a stance is a bit different than using an ordinary stance. If you want to be able to use it properly and at anytime, you will have to carve all one hundred and thirty-six of these runes into your bones. That is the secret to the incredible strength of the wild beasts which amplification stances were inspired by.”

“You have to be prepared for immense pain if you want to accomplish this, but before even considering it, I can tell you that your bones are currently not strong nor hard enough!”

“Without external help, you will need at least three more years before your bones are in the condition to carry these runes.”

“Thank you for pointing that out!” Ye Wei said sincerely, ‘I doubt I would have figured out that I need to engrave these runes into my bones to increase the efficiency of the stance if it wasn’t for Pu Yuan... Though three Years is quite a long time!’

“However, in the treasure chamber there is a bone strengthening pill... Haha...” Pu Yuan’s hoarse voice could be heard laughing.

Having experienced the Supernova stance’s power first hand, Ye Wei was determined to master it. He was determined to make it a technique he could rely on. “I would like access to the treasure chamber!” He said.

“The seventy-fourth row, thirty-sixth column. There you will find what you’re looking for!” Pu Yuan pointed to the corridor that led to the treasure chamber.

“Thanks!” Ye Wei nodded and went in.

Moments after, Ye Wei returned with a jade bottle in his hand. It contained the specialized bone strengthening pill, Unyielding Gold. This pill was very rare. Nowadays it could be found nowhere other than the treasure chamber of the Glacial Temple.

“This jade trinket...” A little sword-shaped jade trinket appeared in front of Ye Wei as Pu Yuan waved his hand.

“There is a miniature teleportation array. When you become a five-star Warrior, you will be able to use this trinket. It will bring you back here to the temple.”

‘This is... This is beyond belief.’ Ye Wei’s eyes lit up, and he took the trinket without hesitation.

“When you are back outside, you will have to be careful with your every move. The Glacial Emperor was once the strongest man in the Zhou dynasty, and one does not become the strongest without making enemies. If people learned that you are master’s successor they would stop at nothing to kill you, especially those people from the Vermilion dynasty!”

“About three hundred years ago master was set-up... He was surrounded by over ten thousand Vermilion dynasty elites. He fought for three months day in and day out. After killing a few thousands of some of the strongest cultivators in that era, he succumbed from exhaustion dying by their hands .”

“Usually, only the leader of a dynasty could call himself emperor, but during master’s era the reigning emperor did not dare say anything about the name master went by...”

“There are three dominating families, three royal families. Ever since the Zhou dynasty was established, the strongest cultivators were chosen from these three families in a strict selection process to determine who would become the dynasty’s emperor. One of the three royal patriarchs was once my master’s disciple.”

“When the royals and nobles heard that master had fallen, they all felt regretful. Had they known about the ambush earlier, they would have sent their men to rescue him. If he had lived, the Zhou dynasty would still

be at its highest right now..." Pu Yuan sighed then continued, "But if you cover your tracks well, the news of a new successor should not reach that far for a few years. Having said that, you shouldn't let your guard down because master had enemies within the Zhou dynasty's borders as well."

'One person against over ten thousand cultivators?' Ye Wei was absorbed in the story Pu Yuan was telling, shocked and tongue-tied.

"I hope that one day you can overtake master's level and achieve greatness far beyond him!" Pu Yuan rose his head and glanced at Ye Wei with an energized look.

"Exceed the Glacial Emperor?" Ye Wei could feel Pu Yuan was being cryptic. He was confused and did not see how he would be able to surpass the Glacial Emperor.

"Master built this temple partially to seal the demons and monster lurking below in the Bloodmist Abyss... That iron talisman, he found it in the abyss you saw a few days ago. Although he spent decades researching it, he failed to fathom its mysterious purpose or use. I have been watching since I opened the bloodmist barrier and the fact that you are able to use it alone says to me how special you are!"

"Now that you are master's inheritor, your life will change! You shall become powerful, and you will shape the world." Pu Yuan's face became straight. "I strongly advise you master the Supernova stance in the temple before going outside again." He continued as Ye Wei put the jade trinket in his bag.

"It will take some time for me to master it... Sorry, but I have pressing matters back home; I have to go home first." Ye Zhong was still Ye Wei's priority after all. 'I have the Welkin Leaves in my bag now, and Zi Yan is waiting for me outside!'

"As you wish... I will teleport you outside now. Come back again when you become a five-star Warrior!" Pu Yuan nodded and covered Ye Wei in a blue light.

"Be careful out there!"

Pu Yuan waved his hand, and the temple was once empty again.

‘This boy truly has great potential! What if he really can reach that level? I might actually get to live again...’ Pu Yuan mumbled.

‘A diamond in the rough. It just needs some polishing.’ He pondered and laughed as his figure faded in the temple.

After the slightly uncomfortable feeling of dimensional travel, Ye Wei opened his eyes to see the familiar scenery. He was once again in the valley.

‘Little Wei, are you okay?’ Lin Zi Yan smiled.

‘Zi Yan!’ Ye Wei smiled back while running over to her.

‘Bang! Bang!’

Just when Ye Wei got to her side, a rumbling noise sounded and echoed in the valley. The Selenic Beast statue sank into the ground and disappeared, and the cultivators sent here by different powers who camped outside panicked as the unexpected happened.

The red mist in the valley slowly faded shortly after. From now on, only the jade trinket would allow one to step inside the mysterious realm.

‘Zi Yan, let’s go!’ Ye Wei looked at the now ordinary valley and said eagerly.

‘To the Ye mansion? Or where do you want us to go?’ It was not hard for Lin Zi Yan to guess why he looked nervous and restless.

‘To Master Yi first!’ Ye Wei decided as they ran to the beast carriage. ‘There is no point going home, none of us know how to use the herb anyways.’

Chapter 105: Farewell

Green Moon City, Ye mansion.

Ever since the city learned Master Yi's new legacy apprentice was a Ye, the once quiet corner where the Ye mansion was located became one of the busiest parts of the town. There were thousands of visitors arriving on foot and by carriages everyday.

With the compensation they got from the Du family, Ling He Merchant Guild, and General Zhou Wu the Ye family was able to hire some powerful Warriors to help them recover. On top of that, they were now backed by Master Yi. They were slowly becoming powerful enough to rival the Big Three.

If more members of the family were able to become condensed prime Warriors, it wouldn't be impossible for Ye family to grow into the most influential force in Green Moon City.

Although the Ye's were thriving, the Patriarch was seldom seen smiling.

Ye Zhong was a gifted child. He actually had a greater chance of becoming a condensed prime Warrior than his uncles Ye Han, Ye Yi, and Ye Yu who were already peak ten-star Warriors.

With his talented grandchild still in a coma, and knowing that the chance he would never wake up was very high, the Patriarch could not get himself to smile right now even if things were looking up for the family. Master Yi's men had already been sent to the cities close by, but they were not able to find anything despite their thorough search.

"Have they tried Ning City yet? It's a bit far, but they are more likely to find Welkin Leaves in a major city than anywhere else!" Ye Zheng Qing asked the messenger.

"Yes, Master! I will head there after I visit Mount Yu Ying later this afternoon. I will make sure Master Yi sends his men there if he hasn't already!" The man in black uniform replied.

"Get going then, what are you waiting for?!" The Ye Patriarch has not

been himself recently. His patience was overshadowed by stress and restlessness.

As the Patriarch sent the messenger away, his sons and him saw an approaching runicle. “Speaking of the devil! Do you think he has good news for us?” Everyone close to the gate put what they were doing aside to welcome the surprise guest.

“That’s a runicle! Could it be Master Yi?”

“Granddad! Dad! I’m back!” Was heard as the runicle door opened, and Ye Wei leaped out running towards his family.

“Master Yi!” Everyone bowed and greeted as a scruffy looking man in a gray robe shortly followed.

After arriving at Master Yi’s place, Ye Wei immediately fetched him and rushed to the family mansion. As for Lin Zi Yan, there were some things she had to attend to so she couldn’t come along.

“We found Welkin Leaves!” Ye Wei exclaimed.

“Did Master Yi find it for us?” At first, the Ye’s were shocked, and they gazed at the Runemaster with undisguised reverence and grateful looks.

“Oh, can we not talk about that? The men I sent to Ning City were useless! Little Wei and Zi Yan beat them to it!” Master Yi laughed and shook his head.

Everyone turned their heads to Ye Wei and was even more shocked to hear what Master Yi said.

“Granddad, we’ll talk about this later. Let’s go to cousin Zhong’s room!” There was urgency in Ye Wei’s tone.

“We have the Welkin Leaves now so there is a great chance I will be able to wake him up.” Master Yi smiled and patted Ye Wei trying to calm him down.

The group went directly through the courtyard into Ye Zhong’s room. Ye Zhong’s eyes were tightly shut, and his face was pale.

Master Yi stared at him for a while before he channeled his Qi. He then

rose both his hands as his will-force and Qi rushed out. His fingers quickly whizzed through the air, and within moments, three hundred and sixty-six runes were floating over Ye Zhong.

“Forbidden Stance, Green Mizzle!”

A vast amount of Qi flowed through the runes lighting them up and turning the whole sequence green. This was a forbidden mid-level Myst stance. The formula for this stance was given to Master Yi by the Holy Conservatory when he passed the test to become a Runemaster.

Although it was only a mid-level Myst stance, its real value was no less than any high-level -one due to its practicality.

“Hand me the herbs!” The green light linked all three hundred and sixty-six runes together as the whole sequence vibrated. A screen of light grew upon the sequence, and the runes turned into a cloud shape.

Ye Wei gave Master Yi the Welkin Leaves right before the runic rain was about to fall. The Runemaster shredded the herb trimming it into small silvery pieces with his Qi.

Drops of silver green life energy rained down onto Ye Zhong. It fell onto his skin and was absorbed by his body and then flowed to his Sentient.

Under the nourishment of this silver green energy, the scars and cracks in Ye Zhong’s Sentient slowly started to mend. He made a mumbling sound, and his eyelids twitched as he moved for the first time in a week.

“Cousin Zhong!” Seeing this scene, Ye Wei tightly clenched his fist in excitement. Everyone eye’s in the room widened, and they looked at Ye Zhong unable to contain their exhilaration.

After being asleep for so long, he finally moved! There were signs of him waking up!

The green rain stopped, and the cloud disappeared.

“Ye Zhong’s Sentient has recovered. He should be fine, but...” Master Yi paused to check his pulse and continued, “He needs to rest in bed for a while longer until he regains his consciousness and body strength back.”

“Thank you! And sorry for the trouble!”

“Thank you, Master Yi!” All of the Ye’s cried tears of joy. They were glad their precious Zhong was out of danger.

After hearing what Master Yi said, Ye Wei also exhaled deeply. His eyes filled with tears, he finally felt at ease after a week of constant worries about his cousin.

“I will stay in the mansion to keep watch until he fully recovers; meanwhile, I can teach little Wei how to train and cultivate efficiently now that he is a Warrior!” Master Yi said as he decided. How quickly Ye Wei advanced to the Warrior level left one breathless. Even Master Yi could not help but admire his young legacy apprentice. He knew he had truly made the right decision in choosing Ye Wei. And now that he had become a Warrior that meant he could finally start down the long and winding path of a Runemaster; he could now learn and refine stances! Master Yi thought all this while still in shock from Ye Wei’s talent.

“What?! Little Wei is a Warrior?!” When Ye Zheng Qing and the rest heard the news, their faces turned from their previous reverence to astonishment; they felt like they were in a dream and didn’t dare believe the words Master Yi just said.

“Are.. are you sure? Master Yi? This is just....” Ye Jing Jing said full of disbelief.

Ye Wei, a thirteen year old Warrior, was now one of the top young cultivators in Green Moon City. Everyone was ecstatic and immensely proud of what Ye Wei accomplished in such a short period of time.

For the next few weeks, Ye Wei trained under the careful guidance of Master Yi. It had to be mentioned that Master Yi’s knowledge was profound. It was vastly superior to anyone else in Green Moon City, and that contributed to Ye Wei’s quick improvement in understanding mystic runes and mystic stances.

During this time, Ye Wei focused on optimizing the Supernova stance.

After taking Unyielding Gold, his bones were hardened from the pill's nourishment.

This was the first time Ye Wei had locked himself up to cultivate in a training chamber, and it helped consolidate his foundation which had become unstable due to his sudden increase in strength at the Bloodmist Labyrinth.

After half a month, Ye Zhong finally woke and found that his body was slowly getting stronger and stronger. Shortly after the Ye family arranged for a feast to celebrate the occasion.

Knowing that his cousin was swiftly recovering, Ye Wei's mood was greatly lightened. This caused his cultivation speed to accelerate, as there were no immediate threats he had to worry about. Finally, he felt at peace and was getting more skilled and stronger every day.

Over time, every bone in Ye Wei's body underwent significant changes. Runes were layered on top of them starting from his hands to his shoulders and then down his spine to his legs, and afterwards, the runes even spread to his skull.

This process happened over the span of a month in the training chamber. Finally, all the runes on his bones were linked together as a golden light flowed through them. Ye Wei's body had a golden glow from head to toe when the runic connection was established.

Ye Wei felt power envelope his bones. He clenched his fist, and a cracking sound was emitted from his body.

'Is this the power of the Supernova stance?'

Ye Wei was thrilled. After a month of hard work and self-improvement, he finally successfully imbued all the specialized runes of the Supernova stance into his bones. If he wished to do the same with the second evolution of Supernova stance, he would have to spend quite a bit longer, but Ye Wei's mind was eased just by thinking about how strong the first stage of Supernova stance was.

The first stage of the Supernova stance could make Ye Wei three times

stronger than he current was, and if he used other stances while the Supernova stance was active, the power of those stances would also be increased three times too. Under the effect of the Supernova stance, Ye Wei would have enough Qi to use a low-grade mystic arm.

After Ye Wei had begun to practice the Supernova stance, he found it easier to learn other stances. He was starting to understand why the Glacial Emperor was able to master so many of them and possessed such great power. ‘Seventy-two interstellar secrets,’ was an amazingly informative text on runes, just the Dark Sky chapter alone could be interpreted thousands of ways. If just one chapter was so knowledgeable, then what would the rest of the volume contain?

Not long after Ye Wei finished the imbuing process, Master Yi entered the training chamber, and there was a sense of heaviness on his face.

“Master, what’s the matter?” Ye Wei asked looking at Master Yi. Having been close to Master Yi for an extended period, Ye Wei discovered he was actually not as weird as he appeared to be. He had a soft, approachable, and affable side as well, and Ye Wei’s respect for him had grown massively.

“Zi Yan left you this letter and an amulet. She had to return to her family!” There was a deep sadness in his voice. “She said it would break her heart to say goodbye to you face to face!”

Ye Wei froze after hearing Master Yi’s words. He had not seen Lin Zi Yan ever since he returned from Bloodmist Valley. He was under the impression that she was also undergoing closed door training since she acquired pills that would aid her cultivation. Never did he expect her to leave so suddenly.

Ye Wei’s felt sour and bitter in his heart. Although he knew this day would eventually come, but when it actually happened, he was not able to comprehend or handle the overwhelming feelings of shock and sadness he felt.

Ye Wei lowered his eyes trying to cover his emotions. Upon opening the letter, he could smell her fragrance, and lines of graceful handwriting

projected into his eyes.

“Little Wei, it is finally the time for us to part, the time to say goodbye. I always thought of myself as just a guest in Green Moon City, that I came alone and would leave alone, that I would bring nothing back with me. I know that everything good will always come to an end, but I don’t know why I feel so unresigned to leave.

Thank you. You have given me a lot of good memories to take home with me, and I would also like you to thank Master Yi for me for how he took care of me during these past two years.

Life is full of meetings and farewells; it’s full of resentment, and now I have to return to my family. This is a piece of spirit jade, a token that represents my family. I hope this will remind you of me. If destiny allows, I hope we see each other again...”

Ye Wei remembered Lin Zi Yan’s tears and smiles. He held the amulet tight as his heart ached. He could feel her helplessness and reluctance just from reading her words.

“Master, can you tell me what family Zi Yan is from?” Ye Wei rose his head looking at his Master with determined eyes.

“One of the three royal families of the Zhou dynasty!” Master Yi paused briefly and sighed.

“One of the three royal families?” Ye Wei exhaled slowly, slightly startled. “I don’t care if she is blue-blooded I will make a name for myself in the capital one day!”

“If you want to go and find her, it’s not just the royal family’s respect and approval you need to earn...” Master Yi looked worried as he stared off into the distance, a spark of fear appeared in his eyes.

Ye Wei was slightly confused, but that was because he didn’t know to what lengths royals would go to have their way...

On the road outside Green Moon City.

A runicle was traveling at a high speed as a slender silhouette stood by the window looking towards the city as it became smaller and smaller.

Her long dark hair encircled by a chain of crystal beads linked together by a golden thread glowed purple under the rays of the sun passing through the runicle's window. Her long dress complimented her figure well and there was a silver gleam from her bracelet every time she moved her wrist. Her posture conveyed desolation and loneliness.

'I didn't think I would have to leave so soon. I might never see him again...'

Although she has not been close to Ye Wei for long, Ye Wei had left a lasting impression on her; he had deeply affected her heart. She gave Ye Wei the jade amulet so that he would remember her, but it was also a clue, a compass that might lead him to her.

"Your Highness, the royal selection is in five years. If you pass, you will be qualified to study at the Holy Conservatory. You have to train as hard as possible. Don't let the ancient ones down!" An old lady bowed and spoke to her. She sounded respectful but came across a bit blunt.

Lin Zi Yan frowned and answered with displeasure in her voice, "I know!" It was apparent that she was repulsed by the idea.

She wanted to become stronger and get the chance to cultivate at the legendary conservatory, but she hated being her family's chess piece.

Resentful and helpless Lin Zi Yan watched the tall walls of Green Moon City disappear at the edge of the runicle's window.

Chapter 106: New Face

“Master, push me ten times harder. I can take the pain!” Ye Wei rose his head and gazed at his master with a determined look. He needed to become stronger, not only for Lin Zi Yan but also for himself and his family!

When you are weak, you do not matter; you can't do anything but watch as things happen around you. His family was nearly wiped out, his cousin was put into a coma, and on top everything else he was abandoned by Lin Zi Yan. All of this effected Ye Wei's mind greatly and perhaps wouldn't have happened if he was stronger. Because of all this, he desperately sought after power.

Master Yi was startled. He could feel Ye Wei's determination and intensity. He also saw a lot of his younger self in Ye Wei, especially his thirst for power driven by a sense of self-incompetence. He wasn't sure how high Ye Wei's talent would take him paired with his intense desires.

Master Yi said, after a moment of silence, “We will go to the hidden area at South Star Academy. The coming three years you will train ten times harder than normal cultivators. Are you ready?”

“Yes!” Ye Wei nodded heavily.

After giving some of the treasures he collected from the Bloodmist Labyrinth to his family, Ye Wei bid farewell and followed his master to South Star Academy.

In a corner of South Star Academy, there was a hidden area that was accessible only with a specific mystic stance. This was a place built on the principal's orders specifically for Master Yi as a token of friendship.

After being runically marked by the stance, Ye Wei was able to enter Master Yi's quarters. It was the perfect location for intensive training because there would be no disturbance from others.

Ye Wei started to cultivate every day while being supervised by Master Yi. When he was not training, he would practice the stances he had

learned that week. He took all kinds of pills every day including Silver Moon pill and Unyielding Gold, apart from that he also bathed in herbal medicine prepared by Master Yi.

Day after day, year after year, time passed by in a calm and fulfilling manner, and the once naive and innocent boy slowly grew up.

Three years later...

After a day of class, the students of South Star Academy gathered in the dining hall. There was always a vibrant and lively vibe when students gathered and exchanged their stories about how fun or boring their day was.

It sounded like sirens singing in the females' dining area, and the smiling youthful girls of South Star Academy were quite a pleasant sight. This made it quite hard for the boys to focus on their food.

Sitting at the eastmost table were the students who lived in Green Phoenix hall. They were beautiful and graceful even compared with the high standards. Their confidence and small prideful smirks set them apart from the others, and that was because they, together with the boys from the Crouching Dragon hall, were the top students in the whole academy.

"Joe Yin, you can probably challenge the elite students again! I think you might actually be one of the strongest students at South Star. Do you plan on participating in the cross academy exchange if you rank high again on the next assessment?" The clear eyes of a round-faced girl fell onto the charming looking girl next to her.

It was not a surprise that people were jealous of Joe Yin. In only three years her cultivation had improved massively, and this five-star Warrior was one of the top ten students in the academy, top three among the girls.

"Oh well..." Joe Yin replied coldly. Comparing to three years ago, she has changed a lot. Her body was long, slim, and beautifully curved. Today she was wearing a long white dress that complimented her curves. Her body was not the only thing that had grown as she now had a head of long glossy hair. Despite this, her delicate facial features remained that

same and with this new image she was considered a goddess by many male students.

‘They seem to like me... But to be honest, I don’t think I have that much to be proud of.’ There was a faint hint of bitterness on her otherwise calm face.

In the past three years, Joe Yin had visited the Ye mansion countless times, but she never got to see Ye Wei. All she heard was that Ye Wei was training with Master Yi. She heard briefly about how he broke through to become a Warrior before he entered closed door training with Master Yi.

Every so often she would stop and wonder how Ye Wei was doing, not wanting to be left too far behind, and this was the reason why Joe Yin has been constantly training and got to where she was now.

“Sis, are you okay?” The round-faced girl asked in a confused tone.

“I am fine.” Joe Yin shook her head.

There was a series of disturbance on the other side of the females’ dining area, and the faces of all the girls were glowing red, covered with excitement.

“Who is that boy? Is he new? He’s quite handsome!”

“I don’t know! I’ve never seen him before!”

All of a sudden every girls’ eyes were set on the boy who just entered.

This boy was tall, handsome, and looked energetic. He wore a white robe, and his hair was layered and medium long. His pale skin made his chiseled face stand out even more. His eyebrows were long and sword-shaped, and his eyes were as bright as the stars. He was aware that everyone was looking at him, but he didn’t seem to care; he just kept walking confidently towards the food counter.

“It’s him!” Joe Yin suddenly stood up. She excitedly looked at the boy as her eyes started to get moist, he was no other than Ye Wei.

“Sis, do you know him?” The round-faced girl looked at Ye Wei from a distance as her face turned red.

“Yeah...” Joe Yin nodded. How could she forget the face that she has been missing for three years? She felt complicated and wasn’t sure if she should walk up and greet him.

Ye Wei’s presence and appearance had changed greatly, and now he stood out like a crane standing in a group of chickens. The boys, especially the ones from Crouching Dragon hall, were not happy with the commotion caused by him.

“Where did this kid come from?”

“I don’t know him, but if we haven’t heard of him he’s probably just a weakling with good looks!”

Disappeared for three years, Ye Wei had no contact with anyone in South Star Academy. Even his old friends, few as they were, couldn’t recognize him because of how different he looked.

Ye Wei scanned around him to refamiliarize himself with the environment. He felt a bit melancholic looking around. He went to the food counter and planned to say hi to his old friend Cao Ning after eating.

Joe Yin was fascinated by Ye Wei’s graceful bearing and could not contain herself anymore. She quickly walked toward him.

“Wei...” Joe Yin stood next to Ye Wei, and she looked at Ye Wei with charming eyes. She took some time to organize her thoughts then said.

“You are...?” Ye Wei glanced at the long haired young lady with a dazed and confused look.

“I am Joe Yin. Wei... It’s been a while” She tried to contain her emotions while speaking in a soft tone.

“Oh! Yin, long time no see.” Ye Wei nodded and said calmly; then he turned around to collect his food. In his heart, Joe Yin was no more important than anyone else in the dining hall; she could no longer set his heart off.

Joe Yin opened her mouth, but words wouldn’t come out. Her heart ached as she looked at his back with bloodshot eyes.

The boys were furious. The cold girl who they would do anything to please, the goddess whose smile they dream about before falling asleep, was being friendly to approach a new face and was then ignored!

“Pffft, who is this guy? Does he want to die?”

“Joe Yin said hi, and he is just going to turn around?”

A few of the Crouching Dragon hall boys were very upset. Many of them had confessed their love to her in the past and were rejected for stupid reasons. Ye Wei’s cold reaction to her was like grains of salt to their mental wounds.

One of the taller boys stood and walked up to the food counter. He spat on the ground then grabbed Ye Wei on the shoulder.

“Hey, who are you?” He asked angrily as he stared at Ye Wei from a height two heads taller.

The crowd was already looking at the tall boy when he stood up; he was one of the top three cultivators at South Star Academy; Mu Feng, a six-star Warrior.

The girls knew what Mu Feng was capable of, and they were starting to worry about the good looking new face. Ye Wei looked too young and pale to be someone who was able to defend himself properly.

“Mu Feng, what are you doing?!” Joe Yin frowned and shouted.

“This kid is a psychopath. I should teach him some manners!” Mu Feng grunted, and his eyes were filled with hostility as he filled his body with Qi.

“Leave me be.” Ye Wei said indifferently.

“Watch your mouth boy. Who do you think you are?” Mu Feng got even more mad from the cold response.

When Mu Feng was about to throw his Qi filled fist, Ye Wei turned around in a fast, ghost-like manner and gently slapped his palm on Mu Feng’s stomach.

“Bang!”

The palm strike connected, and Mu Feng was immediately knocked flying backwards. He was stopped by a dining table twenty meters behind him as plates of food were flipped over and covered his body. He grunted and screamed behind a layer of warm food.

After sending Mu Feng flying, Ye Wei shook his head and patted his clothes. He sighed then walked towards an empty seat with a tray of food in his hands.

Silence fell in the dining hall. Everyone in the dining hall widened their eyes in disbelief.

Most of them stopped eating, and chopsticks were frozen in the air. Some of the students were paying so much attention to the violence they accidentally sent their food to their noses instead of mouths.

They knew how strong Mu Feng was. What they didn't know was the identity of this boy whose casual slap was powerful enough to send him flying.

Who was this boy?

'Three years... has he become this powerful? Looks like he will just keep walking further and further away from me...' Joe Yin looked at Ye Wei's back and realized they were now in different worlds.

Chapter 107: Polaris Academy

Three years... I wonder how much Cao Ning has grown. I heard he got into Senior One.” Ye Wei walked out of the dining hall and slowly walked to the classrooms after he finished his meal.

Ye Wei smiled as he thought about Cao Ning’s clumsiness and silly, modest face. Ning was his only close friend at South Star Academy, the only person who he cared about. ‘He should be reasonably strong now.’ When he was training with Master YI he sent pills, herbs, and other cultivation supplies to Cao Ning.

On his way to the classrooms, Ye Wei bumped into a few worried-looking students who were dashing towards the school gate. He felt slightly puzzled, as he worriedly frowned thinking that something bad might be happening.

‘They would have sounded the bell if it was an emergency; I will look into it once I find Ning...’ Although curious, Ye Wei did not put too much mind to it and kept making his way to the Senior One classroom.

Upon arriving at the classroom, Ye Wei walked into no less ten Senior One students exiting.

“These Polaris Academy students crossed the line!”

“Let’s go! Brother Cao would have started a fight with them by now! We better hurry, there are many of them!”

“Let’s go!” All of them looked angry and concerned. It seems Cao Ning had become something of a leader for the boys, and he was now in trouble.

“Wait!” Ye Wei was going to keep a low profile, but hearing Cao Ning’s name mentioned, he stopped the group before they left. “What happened? Where is Cao Ning?”

“Who are you?” They didn’t stop for Ye Wei as none of these students knew him but they could tell from his concerned tone that he knew the boss of Senior One. They stopped because they heard their leader’s name.

“I am Cao Ning’s close friend. Where is he now? Is he okay?” Ye Wei asked.

“Brother Cao’s close friend?” They looked suspiciously at Ye Wei, and couldn’t sense the slightest Qi disturbance from him thus deduced that he was Cao Ning’s commoner friend from before entering South Star.

“Polaris Academy students are here. One of them bumped into a South Star student, and they started a fight because of it. Brother Cao is already there helping out, do you want to tag along?” One of the Senior One students explained.

“Polaris Academy? The school in Polaris City?” Ye Wei raised his eyebrows and went with the group hastily.

On the way to the school gate, Ye Wei threw a few questions at the students and got a brief idea of what was going down.

The cultivation tournament of the outer districts was starting in half a month. This was an event held by the Zhou dynasty, and it is a time when cultivators from the thirty-six cities in the outer districts gather and represent their schools in the arena. After which a new school ranking was published according to the tournament’s result. The Zhou dynasty’s Green Army would send talent scouts to recruit young blood.

All the participating schools take the tournament very seriously, and the representatives of Polaris Academy decided to head to the venue early so they could settle down and recover from the long travel before competing. As they were on their way to Ning City for the event, their supervising tutors arranged a meeting with the South Star tutors and the visiting students for some reason felt like starting a fight.

Polaris Academy students were picking a fight with South Star students on their campus? There was no way South Star Academy’s students would just take a beating without saying anything. Hearing the news, top students from different classes rushed to the school gate where the fight was taking place.

Cao Ning, the head student of Senior One, was walking passed after he finished lunch and stumbled upon them. He was not sure if he could deal

with Polaris Academy's elites on his own, so he told his friends to get help.

"This is not just a random street fight..." Ye Wei frowned and mumbled to himself; he could see more and more people rushing towards the gate. 'People don't gather up like this for a small scale harmless standoff.'

It wasn't before long when they arrived the school gate, and it was crowded with a couple hundred students.

The crowd arranged itself in a circle in the middle of which was an open space and inside stood seven youngsters in black robes.

"Is South Star Academy this weak nowadays? I can't even find a worthy opponent it seems. I think you people should not even think about participating in the tournament! You will just embarrass yourselves!" All seven of the black-robed youngsters stood with a frivolous posture and wore mocking smiles on their faces as they looked out over the crowd.

Twenty South Star Academy students laid before them, all of them injured. One of them was Ye Wei's closest friend, Cao Ning.

Ye Wei stood outside of the gathered crowd. He could not see the casualties where he stood, but he could hear their hysterical laugh clearly. He frowned and narrowed his eyes trying to get a glimpse of the action from between the crowd. Although he had been training with Master Yi this whole time, in the end, he was a South Star student. He was not happy to hear what the black-robed cultivators had to say about his school.

All of a sudden Ye Wei's eyes widened when he saw a tanned young man with a sturdy build. Ye Wei could recognize this person's honest face anywhere.

It's had been three years, and Ye Wei never imagined he would reunite with Cao Ning in such a situation.

Ye Wei's face turned ash-white. The people who stood around him could feel a cold presence, and they all unconsciously moved and turned to the source of the Qi disturbance. "Brother Cao!" The students who

came with Ye Wei ran through the crowd into the open area. All of them were angry to see their leader hurt. Ye Wei did not say a word. He just followed the Senior One boys.

Out of the few hundred people, most of them were junior or intermediate Students, and seeing that the senior students have arrived on the scene, they all made way for the stronger ones to come through.

“Brother Cao, are you okay?” The Senior One Boys helped Cao Ning up while their eyes spat fire staring while staring at the black-robed cultivators.

Cao Ning was the boss of Senior One. He always had a sense of justice and was happy to help others. He had a great reputation, and although he was from a normal family, even students from martial family respected him inside and outside the classroom. Now that he was injured, none of Senior One students could hold back their anger. They were all pissed and got ready to attack these bad-mannered visitors.

“Oi you, watch bother Cao. I’m going to help them!” The chubby student who helped Cao Ning up didn’t want to ditch his friends, so he rushed in after making sure the boss was in good hands.

“How are you feeling?” Ye Wei held Cao Ning so he could stand steadily. He was relieved as he could sense Cao Ning’s injuries were not serious.

These Polaris Academy students were very ingenious they hit just hard enough to knock the South Star students down but not hard enough to be punished for bodily harm by the academy’s student discipline committee.

“I’m fine!” Cao Ning’s tried to open his bruised eye as he shook his head. Cao Ning did not recognize Ye Wei right away, and he thought the boy next to him was just a kind-hearted classmate.

“Who are they?” Ye Wei looked at the black-robed youngster and asked.

“These students from Polaris are too strong; I am no match for them. We need some teachers here, or a few of South Star’s top ten students to defend ourselves!” Cao Ning was looking at Ye Wei sure he had seen this face somewhere in the past.

“You are doing pretty well for yourself. These guys love you it seems. Three years ago you were too scared to even speak loudly, and now these guys are calling you their boss? Haha!” Ye Wei chuckled mischievously, in the mood to joke as his old friend’s minor injuries were pretty funny. ‘Humm... Should I do something about this?’

“W...Wei?” It was not Ye Wei’s sense of humor, but his accent that gave it away.

Ye Wei had changed a lot. His appearance, posture, and even his way of behaving had changed. Cao Ning would not be able to recognize this good looking young man if he didn’t know Ye Wei better than anyone else at South Star Academy.

“Finally... Took you some time. Was that because of your eye?” Ye Wei’s lips curled into a familiar smile, one that Cao Ning had missed for quite some time.

“It really is you! Where have you been all these years? I have been to the Ye mansion more than a few times, but all they did was give me these pills and herbs and... Nevermind that! They said you went to train with Master Yi, and even they didn’t know where you were!” There was excitement on Cao Ning’s face. He was excited to see his old friend again after three years.

“Me? As you said, I’ve been training!” Ye Wei said casually as he thought about his experiences and the pain of it. He smiled satisfyingly knowing how the three years had changed him.

Although Ye Wei mentioned it as if it was nothing, nobody except him and Master Yi knew what kind of torture and hardship he had to endure.

“Trash!” Amongst the seven black-robed cultivators, a red-haired youngster stepped forward. He spoke in a disdainful tone while sneering.

He stared at the Senior One students as they approached. He laughed and then stomped. The ground fractured, and his body was suddenly filled with Qi as an invisible pressure wave spread from his foot.

“Bang! Bang! Bang!”

Before the Senior One students could get close to him, they were already knocked into the air then fell to the ground. The pressure wave impacted them internally causing them to be stunned and unable to fight.

“What do they teach you here? How to be a punching bag?” The red-haired youngster looked down at where the Senior One students laid and said derisively.

“This strength!”

The surrounding students gasped and exclaimed. All the students from Senior One were seven-star Students or above, and the ones who just rushed into the crowd circle were some of the best students in the class, many of which were ten-star Students.

The ability to knock down that many top Students with just a stomp was telling. The crowd now knew that this red-haired youngster was at least a three-star Warrior!

It was no surprise that a Warrior could beat Students, but neutralizing them with just Qi meant that this Warrior was very well trained...

Chapter 108: Seven-Star Warrior

“This red-haired youngster is the weakest amongst them, but I can sense he is a six-star Warrior. The rest of them haven’t even used their skills yet!” Coa Ning mumbled in Ye Wei’s ears, and there was a sense of worry on his swollen face. His eyes were glinting with fear.

“Six-star Warrior?” Ye Wei was calm, and he casually stepped forward towards the visitors.

‘How dare you touch my friend.’ Thought Ye Wei.

“Wei, please don’t do anything stupid. That guy is a genuine six-star Warrior! Let’s just wait until a teacher or people from the gifted class arrive. We have to be patient!” Seeing Ye Wei was eager to fight, Cao Ning’s back was covered in a cold sweat. ‘I don’t know what kind of fancy runes you can make now, but these guys are powerful cultivators!’ He even stood up and quickly grabbed Ye Wei trying to drag him into the crowd despite the pain he was in.

“Huh?” Ye Wei looked at his arm while glancing at Cao Ning’s hand. He was touched by how tight he was being held. He then smiled reluctantly, ‘Brother Cao, he’s just a six-star Warrior..’

“Who dares have a wild tantrum in my school!?” A loud, angry voice rang out as Ye Wei was about to tell Cao Ning how strong he had become.

The gathering crowd and all the visitors looked in the direction of the angry voice.

“It’s Mu Feng and Joe Yin!”

Everyone’s eyes brightened seeing these two were quickly approaching. They all knew that in the last official ranking assessment Joe Yin came seventh, and Mu Feng came third; they were happy to know the school’s elites were here.

“Finally some decent cultivators?” The red-haired youngster wore a cheeky smile as he arrogantly looked at Mu Feng and Joe Yin.

“What a gorgeous b*tch!” The black-robed cultivators’ eyes only stayed on Mu Feng for a brief moment before they were stuck on Joe Yin. They wondered why they had never seen someone this pretty during their previous visits to Green Moon City.

The leader of the black-robed gang, who had dark circles around his eyes, stared at Joe Yin’s flawless face.

“Hello, I am Ning Yang is your name as pretty as you are? How would you like to transfer to Polaris Academy? A girl as fair as you deserves better company!” The dark-eyed youngster asked in a frivolous tone. He smiled and pervertedly looked at Joe Yin’s body.

Witnessing this youngster openly flirting with Joe Yin, the gathering crowd was furious.

“Watch your mouth! You are at South Star Academy. We take offenses seriously you dog!” Mu Feng was deeply irritated by the disrespectful visitors.

He was the third strongest cultivator at South Star Academy, and he had not yet gotten over the fact that he was humiliated in the dining hall earlier on. Now that these black-robed visitors were disrespecting the girl he admired as if he was not there he finally had somewhere to vent his frustration.

Mu Feng could not take it anymore. He clenched his fist and decided to let his rage take over and punish these arrogant people.

“Get to the side. I am speaking with this fine young lady here; this does not concern you!” Ning Yang disdainfully glared at Mu Feng and scolded. He then turned back to Joe Yin, “I am a lot stronger than that guy next to you. I am sure of it, and I think we should get to know each other better, don’t you?” He said in a soft, smooth voice.

Ning Yang completely disregarded Mu Feng’s presence as he slowly walked towards Joe Yin with a provocative smile on his face.

“Shameless!” Joe Yin bit her lips, and her breasts rose and fell to the rhythm of her heavy breathing. Her cheeks were completely red from

humiliation. She channeled her Qi, and her black hair flowed with the wind.

“Let me handle this. I will teach this disrespectful guy a lesson!” Mu Feng grunted and said while looking at her cute, angry face.

Mu Feng’s body shook and set in motion before Joe Yin could reply. He turned into a flash that sped towards Ning Yang.

“It’s too late now. Even if you got on your knees and apologized, I would never let this go!” Mu Feng said with a cold gaze. His hands flew through the air and fired out eighty-one runes almost instantly.

‘Mid-level Spirit stance – Crystalline Feather Sword’ Mu Feng grunted, and the runes sequence shook as a ghostly wing appeared in the air.

“Let’s go!”

The feather sword pierced through the air like a speeding arrow. It flew towards Ning Yang making a shrill noise.

Mu Feng was naturally trying to impress, so he did not hold back; he used his best stance. The Crystalline Feather Sword was one of the most powerful offensive mid-level Spirit stances, and in the hands of a six-star Warrior, it carried fearsome momentum. The gathering crowd eyes’ widened and they stared with a worshipping gaze while watching this play out.

“He is the third strongest cultivator at south star for a reason. Who else had the power to lead with a mid-level Spirit stance!”

“Judging by this power, Mu Feng should be able to break through soon!”

“Ha! Let’s see how he deals with this, and then how can they call us, South Star Academy, trash?”

Cao Ning looked at Mu Feng’s graceful moves with admiration and envy. Although he was the boss of Senior One, he only just broke through to become a Warrior. He was still only a one-star Warrior.

“Wei, do you see that? He is the third strongest cultivator at our school at the moment. He is around our age, but he is already a six-star Warrior!

Also, I can tell that he's not far from breaking through again." Cao Ning said enviously.

"Oh really?" Ye Wei rubbed his nose and noncommittally shrugged. He recognized Mu Feng from the dining hall.

"He should not be so rash. Those black-robed guys are not simple..." Ye Wei said while trying to sense how strong they were as he quietly looked at Ning Yang, who had his arms crossed in front of his chest, and Mu Feng, who was confidently shooting through the air.

"Third best in South Star? Haha!" Just before the feather sword was about to connect, the red-haired boy who stood behind Ning Yang laughed and stepped forward.

'Mid-level Spirit stance – Raven's Descent!' Over a hundred runes appeared in front of the red-haired boy, and before he even moved his hands hundreds of ravens burst out towards Mu Feng's feather sword.

The black ravens wrapped around the feather sword, and after a series of cracking sound, the feather wing disintegrated. Some of the Qi ravens that were still fine soared towards Mu Feng.

"Bang! Bang! Bang!"

The spirit ravens exploded once they reached Mu Feng, and the sharp pressure waves tore holes on his robe and left bone-deep wounds over his body.

"Ahhhh!" Mu Feng clumsily fell as he was struck and heavily impacted the ground. Blood gushed from his wounds and his mouth; it was apparent that he was badly hurt.

"Sorry! He attacked first; I just defended my friend!" The red-haired boy said.

"Pfft, looks like I am not needed here at all!" Ning Yang shook his head regretfully. He was confident with himself, and his friends but he did not expect the third best cultivator at South Star Academy couldn't even withstand one stance.

This unexpected development shocked everyone. They had already planned out what insults they were about to say when Mu Feng beat up Ning Yang, but they were forced to swallow their words before they could even speak. The South Star students at the scene now looked at the seven black-robed youngsters in fear.

“He is a seven-star Warrior... That must be it!” Cao Ning was greatly startled and started to mumble next to Ye Wei’s ears.

The seven-star Warrior level was a bottleneck in the Warrior level. This is because when breaking through to the seventh star it opens up some previously unused meridians; therefore, helping one increase the Qi flow throughout their body. This was the reason why seven-star Warriors were multiple times stronger than six-star Warriors. They were Warriors feared by anyone below their level.

‘The fact that the red-haired boy could knock Mu Feng out with one blow meant that he was at least a seven-star Warrior, and even the two top students of South Star might have trouble dealing with his friends who were even stronger.’ Cao Ning was startled, and his heart froze as he thought.

“Haha, you see what I mean? Come here girl. Let’s have a chat?” Ning Yang’s arms were still crossed, and he didn’t need to use his hands. All he needed to do was send their weakest to fight. He walked slowly towards Joe Yin in front of the crowd’s fearful faces.

“You..” Joe Yin’s face was ash-white. She didn’t think the cultivators from Polaris Academy would be so strong. She was scared because their leader, the young man walking towards her, was probably extremely dangerous.

Joe Yin’s lips bled from her biting them, and the panic she felt caused her to look around for ways out. After glancing around her eyes fell onto Ye Wei. She knew Ye Wei might be able to help, but seeing how cold he looked she hesitated to ask for aid.

Ye Wei sighed as he saw Joe Yin was shaking from helplessness. He frowned and walked forward then stood still in front of Joe Yin blocking

Ning Yang's way.

Although he did not have feelings for her, he could not stand seeing someone who was so close to him being threatened.

"I don't exactly want to help you, but these people's obnoxiousness is bothering me." Ye Wei said with a calm voice.

Joe Yin's heart ached, and she nodded while stepped back close to the crowd.

Chapter 109: Crossfire

“Do you see that guy on the floor? You will look a bit like that but ten times worse if you make me angry.” Ning Yang glared at Ye Wei and spoke in a cold, threatening manner while pointing at Mu Feng.

“You think you can do that?” Ye Wei tilted his head and looked at Mu Feng while speaking calmly. Not only did he not step away, but he stepped even closer to Ning Yang.

“Who is this kid? I don’t remember him being a student here.”

The crowd looked at Ye Wei with worried eyes as they couldn’t sense any Qi disturbance from him. They wondered if he was out of his mind. They thought Ye Wei was just a commoner friend of a student looking for trouble, and that he had no idea what he was doing.

“Ye Wei!” Cao Ning ground his teeth. His swollen eyes were set on his old friend. At this point, all he could do was to hope that Ye Wei did not need Qi to fight.

‘Ye Wei has trained with Master Yi for three years. His cultivation should be higher than mine, but why does he feel so weak...’

‘That red-haired boy is already a seven-star Warrior, and therefore this Ning Yang character has got to be even stronger! You were a one-star Student three years ago, I don’t know how hard Master Yi trained you, but this guy could be an eight-star Warrior!’

Cao Ning was having lots of doubts.

“Brother Ning told you to get lost! Are you deaf?” The red-haired boy was eager to prove himself to the group, so he rose his hand to slap Ye Wei before Ning Yang made a move.

‘Is he stupid or what?!’

The other black-robed cultivators were laughing. They could already picture Ye Wei on the floor with a swollen face covered in blood.

A loud slap sounded, and everyone in the crowd closed their eyes and

turned away.

“What?!” The black-robed boys’ smile froze; they stared at Ye Wei, and their eyes widened in disbelief.

What they saw was the opposite to what they expected. Ye Wei stood casually as he had been, but the red-haired seven-star Warrior was on the ground with a red handprint on his bruised, swollen face.

“What just happened!”

The red-haired boy clutched his bruised face and stumbled as he tried to get back on his feet. He fearfully stared at Ye Wei. He didn’t even have time to register what happened or react before he saw a blur and felt a sharp pain on his cheek. After which he lost control of his body and flew backwards.

‘Ye Wei is fine?’

The crowd recognized the red-haired boy’s screaming voice, and they were all shocked when they turned back around to see that Ye Wei stood unharmed. Everyone widened their eyes even more when they saw the state the red-haired boy was in.

“What did he do?”

It happened in a flash, and nobody knew how the boy with no Qi presence could defeat a seven-star Warrior.

“You... I will kill you!” The red-haired boy was furious, and he stared at Ye Wei with his bloodshot eyes while drawing rune after rune with his hands.

The crowd was horrified by what they saw, and everyone took a few steps back as they could feel a massive Qi disturbance from those newly drawn runes. They knew if they stayed where they were, the chances were that they would be crushed by this powerful stance.

Ye Wei’s figure turned into a flash and reappeared next to the red-haired boy. He raised his leg and delivered a knee strike to his stomach.

A muffled bang sounded.

It was not loud, but it was solid. Everyone heard the sound and covered their stomach as if they themselves were hit.

“Argh!” The red-haired cultivator was not quick enough to react, and his face was twisted as the runes in front of him disappeared. He covered his stomach and kneeled down in pain. He felt like his intestines were going to come out of his mouth, and he started vomiting.

He was now laying on the ground, unable to retaliate.

“Such incredible speed!”

All the South Star students were shocked. They could not feel any Qi from Ye Wei from the moment he stepped forward to when the red-haired boy fell. They did not know one could achieve this level of body strength at their age.

Ye Wei flicked the dust off his robe and shook his head clearly disappointed. “That was not fun.” He glared the other six black-robed cultivators. “Do you all want to fight me at once? I don’t mind.”

“I didn’t think anyone here would be this strong.” Ning Yang cautiously glanced at Ye Wei. The students of Polaris Academy had always despised the less know South Star Academy, and he never guessed he would meet someone at Ye Wei’s level.

“I have researched South Star Academy’s three strongest cultivators; you have Liu Jian on top, followed by Chen Mo, and Mu Feng.”

“I’m not interested in this piece of trash.” Ning Yang pointed at the injured man on the ground as he mentioned Mu Feng’s name while glaring disdainfully at him.

“Chen Mo is only at the seven-star level, and I am not interested in him either. I am here to have a chat with Liu Jian.”

“But you seem quite interesting as well. Forget about Liu Jian, do you want to have a chat with me?” Ning Yang looked at Ye Wei. ‘If you don’t fight people stronger than yourself then you will become weaker!’

“It seems you should be as strong as Liu Jian if not stronger. I guess I

didn't waste my time coming here, thank you." Ning Yang clenched his fists, and a great surge of Qi burst forth causing his black robe to flutter behind him.

"Don't hold back like you did just now, or you will join them in eating dirt!" Ning Yang said as he stepped heavily on the ground. A burst of Qi rushed out from his body rippling the air around him. His presence pressured everyone around turning their faces as pale as ash.

'That's not good for Wei, this Ning Yang guy has to be an eight-star Warrior!' Cao Ning's pupils dilated as he stared at the black-robed youngster with a surprised gaze.

'No way...' Joe Yin felt the same as Cao Ning, and her face turned ash-white. She couldn't believe people from Polaris Academy were at this level. She was starting to get worried for Ye Wei, thinking that even Liu Jian might not be able to handle this guy!

Joe Yin bit her lips nervously as she knew Ye Wei was strong, but Ning Yang's strength seems much more fierce. Although she was clear that she was no longer in Ye Wei's life, her heart was still his.

"It's his unlucky day. I have not seen Ning Yang this worked up for a while; the fight won't last long!" The black-robed youngsters sneered at Ye Wei because they knew exactly what stance their leader was going to use.

Ye Wei calmly stood still, and he didn't show any emotion. 'Seven-star Warrior, eight-star Warrior, it makes no difference.'

"You're not even going to defend yourself? I hope you won't regret underestimating me!" Ning Yang still couldn't feel any Qi presence from Ye Wei; therefore, he was starting to get angry from the disrespect.

"How can I underestimate you when I know exactly how weak you are?" Unmoved by the taunt, Ye Wei glared coldly at Ning Yang and shook his head.

"I'm weak?" Ning Yang narrowed his eyes, and suddenly there was killing intent mixed with his Qi. He was so furious he laughed

hysterically. He then pulled out his finger, and it ran through the air so quick it was hardly visible. “Don’t be stupid; I want you to tell others how useless your school is compared to Polaris Academy, that is if you can live through this stance.”

“Zoom! Zoom!”

In just a moment, one hundred and thirty-six glowing runes appeared. The sequence vibrated vigorously as Ning Yang put his Qi into it.

‘Fire Tiger’s Return!’ Ning Yang stared coldly at Ye Wei and grunted.

The spirit tiger was over five meters long, and its burning presence heated up the surrounding air as its roar deafened the crowd.

“Rooooar!”

Its blood scented aura spread, and everyone started to shiver uncontrollably as if they were impacted by the tiger’s presence.

The spirit tiger leaped into the air, turned around and struck Ye Wei on the head with its steel whip-like tail. The shrill sound of it penetrating through air gave people a headache.

‘Explosive Steps!’

‘Triple Phantom Finger!’

While the tiger’s tail was on its course to Ye Wei’s head, Ning Yang drew two more rune sequences.

The runes condensed under Ning Yang’s feet, and he stomped the ground launching himself towards Ye Wei with the momentum of a speeding arrow.

Ning Yang got to Ye Wei before the spirit tiger did, and he assessed his position while shooting three Qi bolts at Ye Wei’s paths of retreat.

The three green Qi bolts covered Ye Wei’s back, left, and right side while the tiger’s tail whip was going to land in front of him; he was completely surrounded by high-level Spirit stances!

In one breath’s time Ning Yang used three forbidden high-level Spirit

stances. This shocked everyone in the crowd. Every held their breath and wondered how Ye Wei could appear so calm.

Ye Wei rose his head, “Ha!” He channeled his Qi, and a silver energy enveloped his body forming an armor, as the runes within flowed quickly and tightened around him.

Chapter 110: Root Prison

The tail whip and the three Qi bolts struck simultaneously as Ye Wei just stood still. Dust flew up from the stances' impact creating a smoke screen covering everyone's sight.

"Hahaha! Is he stupid? Both Explosive Steps and Triple Phantom Finger are forbidden techniques! I thought Ning Yang said this kid was worthy of his time just now? Why would anyone in their right mind just stand still?"

"I haven't seen Brother Ning used these two stances in a while. The last time he use them he brought a nine-star Warrior to his knees!"

"Pfft, this kid obviously has a death wish!" The black-robed cultivators mocked and sneered as they looked at the smoke screen.

In their eyes even if Ye Wei was hiding his power, he would be either dead or gravely injured after taking these two stances.

"Sh*t, this is not good. I think that kid is dead; these Polaris Academy students are crazy! Why the hell would they do this? Aren't they afraid they are going to get punished?"

The crowd felt horrible. They felt pity for Ye Wei and were furious with the Polaris Academy student's action.

"Wei!" Joe Yin bit her lip, and her eyes were teary as she didn't think Ye Wei would just stand still and take the hits! She couldn't believe that Ye Wei might be dead now because of her. 'Either of those stances would easily knock me out!'

Joe Yin ran towards the smoke screen in a panic shortly followed by Cao Ning, who was as nervous as she was.

"What an idiot. The funny thing is he knew how dangerous those stances were! Haha!" Ning Yang laughed disdainfully.

"Crack! Crack!"

Ning Yang could sense something unusual from Joe Yin and Cao Ning's direction and stopped laughing.

Just when Joe Yin and Cao Ning stepped into the smog, they felt like they were pulled towards the ground. They couldn't even lift their feet. Ye Wei slowly stepped out of the settling dust as the smoke screen was quickly drawn to the floor.

Ye Wei looked relaxed, and he casually cracked his knuckles. "I was hoping to learn something from your stances, but I couldn't even do that!" He glanced at Cao and Joe then turned to stared at Ning Yang.

"Step back a little." There was a sense of tranquility in Ye Wei's voice, and he waved his hand at Cao and Joe.

"Okay!" Cao Ning nodded stiffly and followed Ye Wei's eyes to the seven black-robed youngsters as he tip-toed backwards. He was beginning to believe his old friend might actually be able to crush these visitors.

'I guess he has been more productive than I was in these past three years...' He could not imagine how strong Ye Wei actually was, and there was really no way of knowing.

Joe Yin followed Cao Ning backwards; she was still slightly traumatized.

The crowd went crazy. They never would have guessed Ye Wei could survive and walk out gracefully.

"Isn't that the boy who knocked Mu Feng down with just one swing?" People started to recognize his face after one of them pointed it out.

"What.. What do you want to do to us!?" All seven black-robed cultivators widened their eyes in fear as they subconsciously stepped back when Ye Wei approached.

'He took on two forbidden high-level Spirit stances directly and survived, and I still cannot feel any Qi from him that normal cultivators give off. I've even beaten a nine-star and ten-star Warrior with this forbidden stance combo, how can he not have a scratch...' The thought sent a chill down Ning Yang's spine.

"Let's get out of here!" Ning Yang would much rather leave than to be in the presence of Ye Wei. Up till now neither he nor his six friends had any idea of Ye Wei's level.

All seven of them then ran towards the gate as if their lives depended on it.

“Hey, you didn’t say good-bye to us.” Just when they could smell the fresh air from the other side of the gate, Ye Wei’s voice sounded, and they all stopped running, froze in place.

They wanted to run but they couldn’t. Something the ground rooted them in place and their legs felt as if they were tied to heavy rocks.

“You... You’re a demon! He has to be! This boy is a demon! What kind of wicked technique are you using?” The red-haired boy shouted. They were scared, and for the six of them, except Ning Yang, the hair on the back of their arms stood up and they started screaming.

“Shut up, stop embarrassing yourselves!” Ning Yang coldly stared at his comrades and said. He knew Ye Wei just used Root Prison. A forbidden high-level Spirit stance that generated a pull to lock them where they stood.

Root Prison was a complicated stance, but Ye Wei was able to finish the stance in mere seconds. It was this moment when Ning Yang knew what kind of opponent he was facing.

“We concede. I would like to apologize for the things we said and did! Here is thirty thousand silver worth of Purple Cloud. It should be enough to heal the injured student!” Ning Yan looked at Ye Wei with fear. He exhaled slowly then bowed to the crowd then he took out a bottle from his bag.

Ning Yan was certain this was the correct move; he would rather have all of them walk out relatively unharmed than challenge this monster to a fight.

“You came to us and injured no less than twenty of us. Do you really think I will let you off so easily?” Ye Wei was not impressed by Ning Yang’s gesture, and he didn’t even look at the pill bottle Ning Yang respectfully presented him.

“I apologized, and this bottle of pills is yours. What more do you want

me to do? I admit you are very strong, and I am sure you will beat us even if seven of us come at you at the same time, but I think you should not push us too much. There are stronger cultivators at our school, and you will want to treat us well for when you have to face Qi Xiu in the tournament.”

Ning Yang grunted, and his face became dark, and there was a hint of threat in his voice. ‘If brother Qi Xiu weren’t already at Ning City, you wouldn’t be this cocky.’

“Are you threatening me?” Ye Wei narrowed his eyes.

“You can take a hint. You better let us go now, or I will make sure he pays extra attention to you should you meet in the tournament!” Ning Yang’s chest rose as he spoke in a low voice.

“Kneel and apologize.” Ye Wei said as his face turned cold. His hands disappeared in a flash, and runes appeared in front of him which quickly melted into the ground. Afterwards, the pulling force increased dramatically.

“Pop! Pop!”

The group led by Ning Yang was overwhelmed by the force pulling them down, and their legs softened, forced to kneel on the ground.

All seven of the prideful cultivators were put down to their knees by Ye Wei in front of the hundreds of South Star students. They glanced at Ye Wei with extreme hatred and ground their teeth so hard they started bleeding from their gums.

The fact that they were on their way to Ning City meant that they were strong enough to representing their school in the tournament, and that they were all popular back at Polaris Academy. They had never felt so much shame! The pain in their hearts was a hundred times more agonizing than the physical pain they were feeling.

Ye Wei could see that they were in great pain, but he did not let them go. ‘They should be prepared to be insulted before they came here to challenge and insult us.’

“I will remember the shame you brought upon us today. You better pray that you don’t have to face us in the tournament because I will make sure Qi Xiu hears about how you have disrespected Polaris Academy. I am sure he will be more than happy to avenge us and make you pay for what you did to us today!” Blood trickled down his mouth as he memorized Ye Wei’s face.

“Oh, yea. Now that you mention it there is a tournament coming up right? I didn’t plan on participating, but you’re making it sound interesting. Thank you for kneeling and apologizing! You can leave now.” Ye Wei narrowed his eyes and grunted. He knocked all of them out of the school gate with a burst of Qi.

Drowning in the crowd’s booing noise, Ning Yang stood up and helped his friends back to their feet and walked away.

“Cao Ning, are you okay?” Ye Wei walked over to his old friend with concern on his face and examined his injuries. ‘I should have made them bleed for this... How dare they hurt my friend.’ He then left before the eyes of everyone present with Cao Ning’s arm around his shoulder.

The crowd was completely quiet while Ye Wei and Cao Ning disappeared down the path.

“Who was that? How strong is he!? It only took the weakest of them to beat Mu Feng, but this nameless kid brought them all down to their knees!?”

“That was domineering to the extreme! I think he might even be stronger than Liu Jian!”

The crowd could not stop speculating. They all looked excited and were full of admiration as they watched Ye Wei disappear down the path.

“I remember his face! He was dumped by Joe Yin years ago! I heard he became Master Yi’s apprentice, and got into the gifted class! But he hasn’t shown up for class in a long time. Oh well, it doesn’t look like he needs lessons...”

“Master Yi’s apprentice!? No wonder he’s so strong!”

Joe Yin stood alone to the side, staring at the empty path. She had been training as hard as she could thinking that if she were strong enough, she would have the courage to talk to Ye Wei and apologize.

But after seeing him casually displaying a small bit of his capability, she was scared and felt unworthy. “Why are you so cold... Why wouldn’t you look at me before you left... You could have said something, anything...” There was a bitter smile on Joe Yin’s face because she knew she wounded him deeply and things would never go back to how they were.

Chapter 111: Lineup

Ye Wei and Cao Ning went to a quiet corner at the back of a hill on the South Star campus. He was going to bring Cao Ning to Crouching Dragon Hall, but he couldn't make his injured friend limp so long. He sat Cao Ning down by a rock and took out a red pill.

"Take this!"

Ye Wei handed the pill over.

"No, I don't need this. It's just a scratch!" Cao Ning waved his hand nervously, and his pupils dilated when he saw what Ye Wei was trying to give him.

"Is this a Blood Prime pill!? I am not feeling that bad! No, I can't accept this!" Cao Ning said when he recognized the red glow. He couldn't believe Ye Wei would offer him a rare pill that was very hard to find anywhere on the market.

"Just take it! If you turn this down you are not my friend anymore!" Ye Wei laughed and stuffed the pill in Cao Ning's hand.

"Okay... Fine!" Cao Ning hesitated and ground his teeth.

"That's right!" Ye Wei smiled and patted Cao Ning's shoulder.

The pair then started catching up on what they had been up to these three years. Ye Wei felt dry and boring when he compared what he had been doing with the eventful life Cao Ning had been living.

It wasn't before the sky was completely dark when Ye Wei stood up and said his farewells to Cao Ning.

"Wei, do you really want to participate in the tournament?"

"Yeah." Ye Wei paused and nodded.

"That's great!" Cao Ning was excited to hear his decision. "I will bring the class to cheer for you!"

"Okay, I have to be on my way now!" Ye Wei did not know much about the tournament; he just wanted to ensure the South Star students' safety

considering these recent developments. He wanted to go back to ask his master about the details of the tournament.

After parting ways, Ye Wei headed deeper into the woods to a secret passage, deep into the hill where Master Yi's hideout was where he spent the last three years getting stronger.

"Master, I would like to know more about this cultivation tournament everyone has been talking about!" Ye Wei went straight into Master Yi's room when he came back.

"Why would you want to participate in that?" Master Yi smiled, "With your talent and all you've learned these past few years you are more or less guaranteed to pass the Runemaster entrance exam. Why would you waste time on a silly tournament?"

"I heard that there would be many strong cultivators from different schools attending, and I want to see how I stack up against others. I think I just put my schoolmates in danger..." Ye Wei said with determination in his eyes. He had been training alone this whole time and wanted to apply what he learned to real combat, to improve himself.

"Do you know why the Zhou dynasty holds a tournament every year?" Master Yi sighed and asked.

"To keep the school rankings up to date? To strengthen the dynasty by encouraging positive competition between young cultivators?" Ye Wei asked tentatively. He was aware that they dynasty distributed more resources to higher ranking schools.

"Correct, that is one of the reasons. The dynasty will not admit it publically, but they are actually doing it to for recruitment purposes, more specifically they are recruiting for the Green Army." Master Yi answered in a low voice.

"The Green Army!?" Ye Wei was startled. The royal armed force was a household name. They were the strongest troops of the Zhou dynasty, and they were formed almost exclusively by condensed prime Warriors with a few exceptions of talented individuals who had potential.

Their duty was to deal with the threats posed by demons, wild beasts, and most importantly to protect the royal families.

“Among all armed forces, the Green Army’s authority reigns supreme within the borders. Furthermore, if you commit ‘Acts of Valor’ when you’re in service you could be given plots of land. This could be a city or even provinces if you’ve done something really flashy.”

“If you die while in the line of duty then the army will protect your family for at least a decade in case enemies of the state seek revenge.” Master Yi spoke slowly.

“Their families will be protected too...” Ye Wei mumbled. He never knew about the perks and details.

“But once you join the Green Army, you can never leave. In comparison, you will have a lot more freedom as a Runemaster!” Master Yi continued, “We are free men!”

“If you become a Runemaster and enter the union you will have as many benefits as the Green Army!” He laughed contentedly.

‘Haha! I don’t think Master wants me to join the Green Army...’ Ye Wei got the hint and chuckled. “Master, will they force people to join them?” He continued asking curiously.

“No, if you do not will to join then they will not force you to!” Master Yi shook his head. He had watched Ye Wei grow up for three years, and they had developed a father-son like relationship.

“If that’s the case then I would like to go and challenge people from the other schools!” A fighting spirit grew in Ye Wei’s heart.

Hearing Ye Wei’s wish, Master Yi smiled and said. “Okay then, I will ask the principal to reserve you a spot! And I will write you a letter of recommendation so you can file your application for the Runemaster Union’s entry exam while you’re at Ning City!”

“The tournament is divided into three stages,” Master Yi continued.

“The first stage is an inter-provincial selection. The ten strongest people

will be chosen from each county to enter the next stage. The second stage, of course, is the inter-state selection. Here the top ten contestants of each province that come out of this stage will be qualified to join the Green Army.”

“And the third stage is the most interesting. If you rank in the top ten in that stage, you will have a chance to get into the Holy Conservatory. You might even have a chance to meet Zi Yan again if you get to that point.”

Ye Wei startled after hearing Master Yi’s words. ‘It had been three years since she... I wonder if she’s okay...’

“But with your current level, it will be difficult for you to reach those heights!” Master Yi gently shook his head.

Thirty-six outskirt cities were just the county of the Qing province, and there was a total of eighty-one counties in the province which contained eight hundred and ten schools. There were over three hundred provinces in the Zhou dynasty!

Although Ye Wei was improving very quickly, he had started too late. Many of the young talents began their training with great teachers since they could walk, and even before that they were fed pills and herbs since their birth.

Master Yi had been training Ye Wei for three years, and therefore he knew exactly how strong Ye Wei was. However, even the Runemaster had no idea that his legacy apprentice knew how to use the Supernova stance, as Ye Wei promised himself that he would never reveal his identity as the Glacial Emperor’s apprentice unless lives were at stake.

Now that Ye Wei was a peak ten-star Warrior with the help of the Supernova stance he could beat a one-star condensed prime Warrior and challenge a two-star condensed prime Warrior.

Ye Wei was very close to finishing the second evolution of the Supernova stance, and on top of that, his body was ready to breakthrough. He needed different kinds of energy to stimulate his body; he needed to fight.

That very night, Ye Wei used his jade trinket to enter the Glacial Temple and practiced stances.

The tournament was going to start soon, and the students were feeling the extra pressure. Everyone at South Star Academy was training in their free time hoping that would increase their chances of getting chosen as representatives. And the top students were training even harder as they knew their pride and the Academy's reputation would be on the line.

In a bamboo forest at another corner of South Star Academy, people were having a conversation regarding the tournament inside a luxurious loft.

The oldest of them was a sage-looking, white haired and bearded man then there was a middle-aged man in a gray robe. The other two were smart-looking teenagers.

The sage-looking old man was Gu Qing, the principal of South Star Academy, who lived like a hermit. The grey-robe man was his right hand man, vice-principal Xu He.

The white-robed teenager was Liu Jian, and the other boy in a faded gold robe was Chen Mo.

"Principal Gu, it came to my attention that we are lacking another suitable candidate. Out of our students, we only have Liu Jian and Chen Mo who are seven-star Warriors or above, all the others are just lackluster! If we really are aiming for the top ten in our county, we will need at least three seven-star Warriors..." Vice-principal Xu He spoke in a worried tone to the old man who sat in the lotus position; he wasn't sure if the principal was awake or asleep.

The principal's eyes were close when he nodded.

There was no limit to how many representative each school could send for the initial group stage selection matches as long as they were registered students; however, schools usually only send Warriors to not waste others' time.

But once the group stage is over, each of the top ten schools were only allowed to send three students to compete in the placement fights. That was the reason why the leaders of South Star, and every other competing school, were having headaches assembling their squad that could actually be able to contest the other schools in the fights.

The vice-principal started worrying after checking the tournament results from the past years. He noticed that out that all the high-ranked students on the school's ranking it did not contain anyone higher than a six-star Warrior. He didn't want the school to make a fool of itself.

"Vice-principal, just put Mu Feng on the roster. It's okay that we don't have a lineup with three seven-star Students or higher. I will carry the team. I guarantee that we will reach top ten; nobody will think little of us!" Liu Jian displaced the confidence of the best student of South Star Academy in his speech.

"Are there any chances that Mu Feng will breakthrough within half a month?" The gold-robed teen sounded more calm and mature when he asked the vice-principal.

"There is a slim chance, but Mu Feng just got injured by people from Polaris Academy, and now his body is not in the optimal condition to push his cultivation more..." The vice-principal signed and shook his head.

'Of course, I want to trust you, Liu Jian, I have seen you fight... But what if we don't get into top ten? Our reputation is on the line! It would be humiliating if we failed to advance in front of thirty-six other schools! I am almost certain that people will talk about how we don't even have three seven-star Warriors to put on our roster...'

"They sure were good at choosing the best time to pick a fight... Only if I wasn't training behind close doors..." Liu Jian grunted.

"I might have a suitable candidate. Give me a minute." Gu Qing stood up and stepped out of the building; he then walked towards Master Yi's hideout. He was taking little slow steps but was traveling at a great speed; his figure was moving in a ghostly manner.

“A suitable candidate? And the principal is fetching that kid himself?” Xu He was confused. He mumbled as he watched the principal disappeared into the woods.

“He is not going to get just some random kid to fill the spot right?” Liu Jian frowned.

“Are you questioning the principal? I wouldn’t be this strong and standing here next to you if it wasn’t for him!” Chen Mo glared. He was not pleased with Liu Jian’s attitude.

Liu Jian was from a martial family, more specifically one of Green Moon City’s Big Three. Having grown up with all the resources his family could provide, the talented youngster was not taught to be appreciative. Meanwhile, Chen Mo was from an ordinary family, and before meeting principal Gu, his family had no ways to develop his talents. Because of that, Chen Mo was very sensitive when it came to the subject of South Star Academy’s principal.

“Maybe I am! Anyway, I would like to meet whoever he brings here, and I will have to see for myself if he or she is worthy.” Liu Jian said with pride. He had always been the undisputed strongest cultivator of the academy for years now.

The competition would not be easily convinced.

After a cup of tea’s time has passed, Gu Qing walked into the loft with a handsome young man.

“Principal, is this the suitable candidate you spoke of?” Xu He was surprised by Ye Wei’s lack of Qi disturbance as he widened his eyes and stared. ‘Does he think we are picking students for a public speaking competition?’

What Xu He didn’t know was that since Ye Wei started practicing the Supernova stance most of his Qi now was held in his bones and hidden under the runes on them instead of inside his dantian.

“Hahaha! He can be the leader of our cheerleading squad!” Liu Jian said while casually looking at Ye Wei. He could also not sense any Qi coming

from Ye Wei.

Chapter 112: Qi Xiu

As soon as Ye Wei stepped into the loft, he could feel the heavy atmosphere and that everyone was judging him. ‘He has the look of someone who makes decisions... Why is he looking at me like this?’ He couldn’t stand the vice-principal’s skeptical stare.

‘This white-robed elder is clearly looking down on me. This guy in faded gold seems nice though.’ Ye Wei thought as Chen Mo nodded with a friendly smile.

“Principal Gu, would this boy be the candidate you spoke about. May I just say I don’t think I’ve seen his face before? And I don’t think he is one of our top students...” The vice-principal said respectfully.

There were few thousand students at South Star, and while it was impossible to know everyone who studied there, Xu He was familiar with how the strongest cultivators looked. He was certain that Ye Wei was not one of them. He also sensed that there was no Qi disturbance from Ye Wei. He was only speaking so subtly because he respected the principal.

“Ye Wei, may I introduce you to the vice-principal, Xu He. He will be the supervisor for our school’s representatives for this tournament. This is Liu Jian, and he is Chen Mo; you should get to know each other better.” Gu Qing pointed around completely ignoring Xu He as he introduced everyone to Ye Wei.

“Yeah.” Ye Wei nodded calmly, “Greetings!”

“Sit down and the vice-principal will tell you the details about the tournament.” Xu He was aware that the principal was unexpectedly very nice to Ye Wei as he never invited the top two students to sit down.

Gu Qing’s friendly attitude to Ye Wei surprised everyone in the room.

After a second Ye Wei’s name and face started to ring a bell, but the vice-principal decided not to say anything about it for now.

Chen Mo was assessing Ye Wei from head to toe. ‘Who could this person be? Principal Gu seems ecstatic to have him here!’

‘I am number one here so how come I don’t get to sit down?!’ Because the principal valued Ye Wei so much this sparked Liu Jian’s competitiveness, “I am Liu Jian, of the Liu family of Green Moon City, you don’t look familiar are you a student here? Or are you from one of the martial families?”

“I don’t have the best memory but I am familiar with the top students at South Star and most of the outstanding youngsters in Green Moon City, as far as I can recall I don’t remember ever seeing your face.” Liu Jian said with a cruel smile on his face. His cold voice dug directly into Ye Wei’s ears. “The tournament is kind of a big deal for me. I don’t really care who you are, and I don’t care about whatever dumb luck led you to get close to Principal Gu, but you better not get in my way... In fact, you know what? Just give up. I already have enough weight to carry in the tournament so if you insist on tagging along and dragging me down, I will make sure you will never make it in Green Moon City.”

Ye Wei gazed coldly at Liu Jian as he was calm and emotionless. He then turned to the principal and asked, “Principal Gu, when are we heading out?” He completely ignored Liu Jian. All he wanted was to challenge and learn from talents of the bigger schools and cities, not from a big fish in a small pond.

Liu Jian was furious that Ye Wei didn’t even seemed to be listening, ‘This kid has balls!’

Under normal circumstances, experienced cultivators like vice-principal Xu He would be able to determine one’s cultivation level but because he couldn’t see through Ye Wei, he did not see the need to break it up. He was also uncertain about the principal’s decision to suddenly add Ye Wei to the roster. He was therefore more than happy that Liu Jian wanted to start a fight, as there was no appropriate way for him to ask.

Although Xu He heard about the incident where Mu Feng was injured by Polaris Academy’s students, to him it was rather normal that young cultivators got themselves injured because of their competitiveness. Wise as he was the vice-principal was not able to link the incident to Ye Wei and remained blissfully oblivious of what the Runemaster apprentice was

capable of doing.

“This tournament is not just about the academy’s reputation and ranking, it will definitely affect the contestant’s future!”

“Especially with the ranked fights. There are only three quotas for each school, Liu Jian and Chen Mo rank first and second. It is only fair that they get two spots, and I am sure the other students think the same. But with you...” The vice-principal finally found a reason to discretely challenge the principal’s decision as he gazed upon Ye Wei and paused, “If you don’t show us some of your skills then it will be hard for me to convince others that you deserve the spot. I will get swarmed with questions from parents and students about you, Ye Wei... As I am responsible for arranging the team, and the tournament in general, I am afraid I will have to conduct a test to see if you are truthy worthy to be on the roster.”

“Sure. What’s the test?” Ye Wei nodded to Xu He as calm as he had been since he was brought to the loft by the principal.

“Let’s make it simple; if you can take three hits from me, you will have my respect!” Liu Jian gazed threateningly at Ye Wei as he stepped forward and spoke before Xu He could answer.

“Principal Gu, what do you think about this?” Gu Qing was watching on the side when Xu He asked nervously.

“Whatever.” The principal waved his hand.

“Very well, Liu Jian.” Seeing that both Gu Qing and Ye Wei did not oppose the proposal, the vice-principal nodded.

“Three hits? What do you say to making it really simple? We will exchange one blow.” Ye Wei stood up, and walked to the middle of the room while glaring at Liu Jian. “I would like to see if you can take one hit from me!” He said coldly.

Ye Wei knew Liu Jian was the only eight-star Warrior at South Star Academy, and that the ‘strongest cultivator’ of South Star was actually not stronger than Ning Yang, the Polaris Academy student he just faced.

Therefore, it should not take him more than one blow to finish this.

“Kid, let me say this before I knock you out. I admire that fact that you have the confidence to stand up against me!” Liu Jian’s face turned red, and he grunted and channeled his Qi. By the time his body was covered by energy that came from his dantian, his figure has already become a blur. His fist became a silver flash heading straight to Ye Wei’s chest with a lightning-like speed.

Although Liu Jian did not use a stance, because his fist was empowered by Qi it was powerful enough to knock out a seven-star Warrior.

It was apparent to anyone in the room that Liu Jian wanted to finish the fight as quickly as he could.

“What an idiot, he should have used a stance...” Chen Mo had been trying to keep quiet, but seeing that Liu Jian was underestimating his opponent, he couldn’t help but shake his head. ‘This Ye Wei was clearly hiding something! Ranking-wise I know you are the best student at South Star right now, but do you really expect it to last if you keep being this careless? If this kid doesn’t beat you here I will one day!’

A shrill sound filled the room that came from Liu Jian’s Qi, and the interior shook.

Ye Wei stood still and calmly watched the approaching silver punch. Liu Jian’s fist and the rest of his body froze in place when he was three inches away from landing his punch. He felt an unmovable resistance as if there was a thick invisible wall in front of Ye Wei.

“A Qi wall?!” Xu He’s eyes narrowed as he mumbled, ‘So he is at least a six-star Warrior; I guess he is qualified to compete at the group stage at least!’

“Oh wow! A six-star Warrior? I guess you don’t have to be in the cheerleading squad, but you are still not good enough to be one of our main fighters!” Liu Jian’s cold glare intensified as he channeled more of his Qi to his fist.

His knuckles shone brighter and brighter showcasing the body strength

of a eight-star Warrior.

“Not bad, when it comes to Qi density you are not weaker than Polaris Academy’s Ning Yang, but I think he is a smarter fighter than you are... You should have met him. He was very polite just like you, you two would get along well.” Ye Wei was more interested in knowing more about his new teammate than beating him. ‘He is not strong but definitely not weak, okay how should I end this politely...’

Ye Wei stepped forward, and the moment his foot touched the ground the wall of Qi in front of him pushed towards Liu Jian like a tsunami wave.

Liu Jian felt like he was consumed by this wave of energy, and feeling the force of a tall slab of metal falling upon him, he quickly leaped backwards after he was hit to avoid the full impact. He took five steps back before he could steady his footing. he left potholes on the solid floor with each step he took.

Ye Wei never moved a muscle except taking that small step forward, whereas on the contrary Liu Jian was panting for air although he was the aggressor.

Xu He was startled. He didn’t think Liu Jian would lose, and certainly not like this manner. The vice-principal could vaguely guess that Ye Wei had already reached the ten-star Warrior level.

Chen Mo was also shocked. He had a feeling that Liu Jian would humiliate himself from the beginning but he didn’t expect Ye Wei could clinch the victory so clean and effortlessly.

Liu Jian was horrified and discouraged by the figure in front of him, and although he had not used a stance in this brief duel, he knew, without a doubt, that he did not stand a chance with or without using stances. He has always been confident and arrogant, but he was shaken by Ye Wei who he felt was even younger than himself. ‘Why have I not heard of this kid before...’

“Xu, are you satisfied?” Gu Qing smiled, and asked the shocked vice-principal in a playful tone.

“Yes, very much so!” Xu He gazed upon Ye Wei with a praising look. ‘He is so young too... If I can make him stay in South Star we can probably get ourselves in the top ten for years to come!’

But at the same time the vice-principal was slightly worried because if Ye Wei was really a registered South Star student then how could he not have notice such talent. He frowned as he considered the worst case scenario as the deadline for this school year’s enrolment was passing soon, and if he sent in the papers now, Ye Wei would not be registered in time to participate in the tournament.

“He is a registered student!” Gu Qing saw through Xu He’s mind. “His master locked him up for training purposes these past three years, we did not cancel his status.

“Oh that’s good to hear!” The vice-principal was relieved then felt shocked again. ‘Wait what... Could this be? He has to be Master Yi’s legacy apprentice! That would explain why I can feel his Qi either! Master Yi must have hidden it somehow...’ The vice-principal thought oblivious about Ye Wei’s Supernova stance.

“Was it you who drove the Polaris boys away?” Liu Jian was rash but not stupid. He looked at Ye Wei with respect upon realizing no one else could have been the valiant defender. In Liu Jian’s eyes power was everything, and although Ye Wei was younger he would treat the winner as a winner should be treated.

“Yes, it was me.” Ye Wei nodded. He could feel their approval. ‘This guy is wild, but I guess he is stupid in a nice way when he’s on my side.’

“Ha, they threatened us right? The Polaris Academy students, we will surely crush them with you on our team!” Liu Jian was feeling positive again.

‘He is very energetic too!’ Ye Wei realized his attempt to humble Liu Jian did not work and that this martial family descendant was a bit reckless.

Chen Mo placed his palm on his forehead feeling a bit embarrassed.

“Liu Jian, don’t underestimate them; they came third in the last tournament!” Vice-principal Xu frowned and said in a serious tone. “And I heard that Qi Xiu of Polaris Academy caused some troubles in Ning City a couple days ago.”

“Qi Xiu!?” Liu Jian and Chen Mo’s faces turned pale when they heard the name spoken. Although they did not have a lot of information on Polaris Academy’s ace, Qi Xiu had the reputation as the one of the strongest young cultivators in the region.

Ye Wei heard this name from Ning Yang and hearing his new teammates mentioned him as well caused his interest to grow immensely.

Chapter 113: List

“Let’s not talk about them for now. South Star Academy is a much younger school, and I am fine if we lose to a well-established school like Polaris. The last time we came in thirteenth in the end, but this time with Ye Wei on our roster, I would like us to squeeze into the top ten!”

“I think it is entirely possible for South Star to reach stage two and compete at a provincial level!” The vice-principal looked at the trio and said excitedly.

‘Only thirty-six schools are participating in the provincial stage, but if we advance to the next stage, we will then be fighting before the eyes of cultivators from more than eight hundred different schools. I really hope that we can get South Star’s name out there and give our students some exposure. If we do well, it will be something we can all be proud of...’

When it came to the school’s reputation and management, the vice-principal was way more committed than his boss; he was immensely grateful that Ye Wei was joining the team, and looked forward to leading it to the possible new heights they could reach.

“Phew, I have been losing sleep over who should take the third spot for weeks now. I hope everyone is happy with each other! Why don’t you three go back and rest a bit? We have to leave tomorrow if we want to make the opening ceremony the day after!” Vice-principal Xu said with a relaxed smile on his face.

After bowing to the principal and the vice-principal, Ye Wei, Liu Jian, Chen Mo headed back to rest.

“Principal Gu, was that Master Yi’s...” Xu He asked curiously.

“Yes, you are correct! Master Yi’s legacy apprentice.” Gu Qing smiled and nodded.

“So you’re are telling that kid had a red Sentient?!” Xu He felt emotional, “Master Yi is a bit of a godly character... I really would like to know what kind of method he used to mold Ye Wei into what he is today in just three

years!”

Xu He exhaled slowly. He felt excited just talking about the Runemaster he admired and respected.

“Well, weak Sentients were never and will never be a problem for cultivators training to become Runemasters.” Gu Qing touched his beard then looked at Xu He. He was more interested in how well Ye Wei was doing in terms of his runic studies. He wondered how close Ye Wei was to becoming a one-star Runemaster.

“Apart from those three, how many and who else should we sent to Ning City?”

“We are not bringing along anyone below the three-star Warrior level as the competition will be tougher than last year. Every school had great young talents last time, and I doubt those kids have already left their schools. It would be a waste of time to bring too many people, and they won’t learn much if they get crushed.”

“I have a feeling that South Star is going to be one of the top ten schools this year!” Vice-principal Xu clenched his fist and said confidently.

“Only top ten?” Gu Qing smiled. Master Yi had consulted the principal before he started training Ye Wei, and while none of the staff knew how strong Ye Wei was as a fighter, the principal had been briefed with regular updates from the Runemaster himself regarding Ye Wei’s progress. “Don’t underestimate Ye Wei; he is capable of doing much more than what you saw today.”

‘Did principal Gu mean that Ye Wei was more than a ten-star Warrior?’ Xu He was confused but also excited. He looked forward to see how the Runemaster’s apprentice could surprise him.

“By the way, I think the Polaris Academy’s students were told to do what they did by someone higher up. The students on their own wouldn’t have that guts to injure our kids like that.” The vice-principal frowned.

“It will be fine, just make sure the team pays extra attention if they have to face Polaris, and show them that we are not to be messed with.” Gu

Qing's eyes lit up. Although he was planning on retiring soon, he was not going to sit back while his students were bullied on his campus.

'Polaris Academy... I wonder if Ye Wei or their Qi Xiu is stronger?' Xu He for the first time in a long while felt competitive. He was excited to lead one of the strongest team South Star had assembled in recent years.

The morning after, in the early hours when students were usually asleep, there was a gathering crowd at the front gate of South Star Academy.

They were all South Star student who knew today was the day when the vice-principal announced who of the school's elites he would take with him to Ning City for the cultivation tournament. Most of the students were here to send off the contestants, and the rest hoped that their names were on the list.

For most of the students, who knew last year's lineup by heart it was assumed that if one's cultivation was above the Warrior level, then they would have a chance to represent South Star to compete against the other schools.

Naturally, the senior classes were there as well with Cao Ning, and they were all excited about the announcement.

"Brother Cao, I don't think I will be chosen to come with you to Ning City so promise to tell us stories when you get back!"

"Hahaha! Of course!" Cao Ning slapped his chest. He was almost jumping with joy when he accepted the request. He had been looking forward to the tournament for a while now. Cao Ning was now a one-star Warrior, and with his training speed he would most likely be a two-star Warrior when he graduated in a year's time.

"You're just a one-star Warrior and you want to represent us in the tournament? Why don't you take a piss on the floor and look at your pathetic face in the reflection?" A mocking voice said while the Senior One boys were chatting and laughing.

"Xiao Qi!" Everyone in Senior One recognized the voice. Cao Ning

frowned and stared. The old class bully was wearing his attitude on his face as he approached.

Both of Xiao Qi's parents were senior tutors at South Star which was the reason why he had never lacked training resources or supplies and on top of that Xiao Qi was actually a quick learner; this troublemaker was now a three-star Warrior!

After Xiao Qi had been humiliated by Ye Wei in the Junior Three classroom three years ago, he had always avoided Cao Ning, Ye's closest friend. However, since Ye Wei had vanished for three years, Xiao Qi had slowly regained his confidence.

"The school allowed anybody above the Warrior level to sign up last year, and brother Cao has broken through since then! Why exactly do you think he can't represent us!?" Cao Ning's friends spoke before he could.

"And who told you that last year's rules apply this year? Idiots... I've been informed that South Star is only going to send twelve cultivators to this year's tournament, and you have to be at least a three-star Warrior to get on the team! So I'm afraid your big brother Cao here will have to wait until next year! Hahaha!" Xiao Qi told the class with an irritated voice. He had been wanting to tell them and watch them react ever since he overheard it from his parents when they were discussing the tournament.

"We have to be three-star Warriors to take part? That is a bit steep..." The Senior One cultivators were shocked and a bit disappointed.

"Who said Cao Ning can't participate?" When Cao Ning was feeling discouraged and slightly helpless, a calm but loud voice sounded behind him.

Ye Wei walked beside Cao Ning and patted his shoulder. Don't worry about it; I have a solution." He then turned to Xiao Qi and said, "If Cao Ning can't take part in this tournament than neither can you!"

"I, a three-star Warrior, one of the twelve best cultivators at South Star Academy, cannot join the team? You're a riot!" Xiao Qi did not recognize who he was talking with yet, and he laughed out loud after speaking.

“You are Xiao Qi?” Ye Wei’s face changed. He frowned as he recognized Xiao Qi’s attitude, ‘It hasn’t changed one bit... Some people just never grow up!’

“You’re correct; that’s me!” Xiao Qi thought Ye Wei was surprised to meet one of the top twelve cultivators. “If you bow before me and apologize, then I will forgive how you just insulted me!”

“It’s him!”

“That’s the boy who defeated the visitors from Polaris Academy!” People in the crowd started to recognize Ye Wei, and they looked at him with the utmost respect.

“I heard he knocked Mu Feng out with just one slap earlier that day!”

“Even Liu Jian himself confirmed he lost to this boy!”

“That is a bit strange; if he defeated Liu Jian that means he is at least an eight-star Warrior! Why can’t I sense anything from him?”

Xiao Qi’s face turned pale as he heard the conversations, and he realized he was the weak one who just embarrassed himself. ‘He is the kid that everyone has been talking about for these couple days?’ He looked at Ye Wei with fear...

He finally noticed the attention he had been getting since he started speaking was not the good kind.

“Xiao Qi, it’s been a while. If you bow before me and apologize, then I will forgive how you just insulted me.” Ye Wei tried to contain his laughter as he spoke.

“You are...” Xiao Qi’s pupil dilated as he finally recognized the person who stood in front of him was Ye Wei. He froze on the spot as he remembered Ye Wei’s prestigious identity as a Runemaster’s legacy apprentice. “I am sorry Ye Wei; I was blind and stupid!” He gritted his teeth and bowed unwillingly.

Xiao Qi would never imagine Ye Wei would become strong enough to beat Mu Feng and Liu Jian in a mere three years! ‘Pfft if I was Master Yi’s

legacy apprentice I would have become this strong too!’

“Buzz! Buzz!”

A shrill buzzing sound came from far away as a black runicle closed in. The black bodied vehicle was decorated with star-like gems. It arrived in front of the students in no time, the runicle door opened and the vice-principal stepped out.

“As you are all here, I assume you know what I will be announcing this morning! This year we will be going to Ning City with a team of twelve students!” Xu He smiled to the anticipating students and said.

“And they are, Liu Jian, Chen Mo, Mu Feng...” His voice was loud and clear. “... Joe Yin, Zhang Jie, Zhao Kun, Zhou Cheng and Xiao Qi!”

“All of you mentioned please get into the runicle!” Xu He announced all twelve names in one breath. All of them were names of three-star or stronger Warriors. He then threw his eyes to Ye Wei. “Psst, you too.” He whispered as the vice-principal did not want to say Ye Wei’s name in public before he had to, ‘I should keep him in the shadows for now...’

Chapter 114: Tri-Solar School

There was a hint of disappointment and helplessness on Cao Ning's face as he could not believe his hard work and effort was all for naught.

This did not escape Ye Wei's eyes, and after seeing Cao Ning's state, Ye Wei looked towards the vice-principal and moved his lips.

"Cao Ning, come over here!" Xu He nodded at Ye Wei then turned to Cao Ning.

Ye Wei was the strongest cultivator at South Star Academy and Master Yi's legacy apprentice. Although he was known to be strict, the vice-principal trusted and respected him enough to approve his request.

"What? Me? I can come too?" Cao Ning was startled. His sadness was replaced with surprise. 'I thought Xiao Qi said only three-star Warriors or above?'

Cao Ning froze and looked at the vice-principal then he saw Ye Wei smiling beside Xu He. It took him a while before he figured out Ye Wei requested the vice-principal to bring one more person along.

"Ye Wei..." Cao Ning felt an itch in his throat. He looked right at Ye Wei with teary eyes. He opened his mouth, but no words came out. Although Ye Wei has disappeared for three years, he had still provided training supplies for Cao Ning. Without which becoming a Warrior would be impossible for Cao considering his talent was just above average. Now that Ye Wei has done him yet another favor, Cao Ning's kind heart was overwhelmed with gratefulness.

"Ye Wei, in the future if you need help with anything at all just let me know! I will not blink even if I have to risk my life for yours!" He swore solemnly.

"When you graduate, you will surely be looking for a martial family to serve? If you like you're always welcome at the Ye family!" Ye Wei patted Cao Ning's shoulder and smiled.

"Can I really?" Cao Ning asked excitedly. For anyone who was born with

an ordinary background, serving a martial family after they graduated was one of their best options, and considering how much the Ye family had grown in the past three years Cao Ning would be guaranteed a bright and stable future if the Ye's took him in.

“Of course! Once the tournament is over, I will find the time to speak with granddad about it! Let's head out; we're taking too long!” Ye Wei gave Cao Ning's back another pat, and together they walked into the floating runicle.

Xiao Qi glared at Ye Wei and Cao Ning. He felt as if his face was burning; he felt like he had been slapped. Not only was he forced to bow and apologize in front of everyone, but he also embarrassed himself by promising Cao Ning that anyone lower than three-star Warrior cultivation would not be allowed to join the team only to be overruled by the vice-principal.

The awkwardness was overwhelming. Xiao Qi felt like he was a small and pathetic clown that his worth was denied by Ye Wei, and he had no way to contest for it. He felt pitiful that he was happy just because Ye Wei decided not to pursue the matter.

When everything was settled the runicle took off before more than a thousand eyes, heading towards Ning City.

The runicle was spacious, and Ye Wei and the fourteen others did not feel cramped at all.

“Cao Ning, how many stances have you learned so far?” Ye Wei and Cao Ning were seated in the corner, and they started chatting quietly.

“Just two...” Cao Ning said embarrassingly. Comparing to other one-star Warriors, he did not know that many stances at all.

“And they are?” Ye Wei nodded and asked in a neutral tone.

“Rolling Stone Punch and the Onyx Tortoise stance.” Cao Ning replied honestly.

‘Why those two... They are both just mid-level Spirit stances...’ Ye Wei frowned. He was confused, but when he reminded himself of Cao Ning's

background, he realized the reason behind it.

Cao Ning had a civilian background; therefore, he could only practice weaker common stances provided by the South Star, and he actually worked hard to earn the rights to be taught these two stances.

“Ye Wei, thank you for asking the vice-principal to bring me along. I know I am not strong enough to fight for South Star, but I am happy just being able to tag along...” Cao Ning’s lips curled into a bitter smile.

“Don’t overthink it; you are already here, and I will think of ways to make you worthy for the arena!” Ye Wei interrupted and nudged Cao Ning.

“Let’s see if we can refine those two stances!” Ye Wei smiled. He knew how those two stances worked, and he was already calculating, picturing how to refine them.

Cao Ning has been practicing these two stances for a long time, and his mastery could very well contribute to the refinement quality. If the refinement went well then, the cosmic energy Cao Ning would receive could be key to him becoming strong enough to fight for South Star in the tournament.

After some brief conversations, the runicle was silent again. Liu Jian, Chen Mo, Mu Feng, and the others were mentally preparing to fight a few challenging matchups, and they closed their eyes to meditate and cultivate so they would display their best in the arena.

Hours passed by in the blink of an eye, and the black runicle was approaching a row of towering mountains as their destination, Ning City, was behind the province’s famous Sunset Mountains.

The mountains stood over ten thousand feet tall, and their peaks were shrouded, bathing in a long, large stream of mysterious light.

The runicle then headed west into a passage that winded through the mountain range. The group looked to reach their destination in an hour’s time, and the palms of some of them were starting to get sweaty. Not all of the young cultivators had been to a major city before, and the thought

of the ancient city's magnificence was causing them anxiety.

A few of the students broke silence.

“Did you know that the City Lord of Ning City, ruler of the province, Lin Yi is a returned prime Warrior who has six hundred thousand men under his command? I heard that his men and him had killed hordes of no less than five hundred thousand demons during the Battle of Trapped Beasts!”

“Battle of Trapped Beast? The battle that took place seven years ago right? My dad still tells me stories about it sometimes. How more than a million demons invaded the province at once... He said that the province's best Warriors set an ambush and lured them into these mountains to contain the mayhem and minimize the loss of civilian lives...”

“That was a dark time. The battle lasted for more than three weeks, and by the end, there were large piles of demon remains next to the bodies of Warriors who valiantly gave their lives, without whom you wouldn't be alive right now.” A few students said in unison.

“The Battle of Trapped Beast was the largest scaled warfare that had taken place within the outskirts region in more than thirty years. Before the battle, this part of the Zhou dynasty was swarmed with roaming demons who were purged during the battle. The cities involved in the battle suffered heavy losses, and we lost many great Warriors. Although the region has yet to recover fully, the streets are now safer than they have ever been”.

The generation that lived to tell the tale still had nightmares about those days. Even though they had survived, at least more than half of their friends and family who fought didn't return.

When their elders risked their lives to protect them all those years ago, all the students who sat in the runicle were still too young to understand the world. Now they couldn't help but wonder if they too would one day fight their own epic battle to protect what and who they loved.

A thundering noise sounded, as a speeding golden runicle approached from behind. It overtook and stopped right in front of South Star Academy's in a very rude manner.

Xu He's heart sank, and he stopped the runicle just in time. A second later and they would have crashed.

The forceful stop shook everyone in the black runicle except Ye Wei, Liu Jian, and Chen Mo; a few of them even fell down.

"What's going on?" Ye Wei opened his eyes and frowned feeling confused like the rest of the cultivators.

"Hahaha!" A hysterical voice sounded from outside the runicle. "Xu He, is that you? Long time no see!"

"It's the Tri-Solar School..." The vice-principal mumbled then ran and flung open the door. "What do you think you are doing!?"

"Eh..." Ye Wei could see seven people had come out of the golden runicle, and all of them had primal wings on their back; they were all levitating.

The one who stood in front was a large built middle-aged man; he had a head of short red hair, and his eyebrows and eyes were red as well. There were three mysterious circular patterns on his pupils, and the fearsome presence he gave off was as heavy as the mountains they were surrounded by.

"Condensed prime Warrior!" Ye Wei narrowed his eyes as he glared at the middle-aged man and mumbled. 'Not an ordinary one either, this red-haired man is at least a seven-star condensed prime Warrior!'

From just standing there he was pressuring everyone. The vice-principal and Ye Wei seemed not at all bothered by him, but the rest of South Star Academy's cultivators became pale and started to breathe heavily.

"Old friend, you don't have to be mad? I'm just here to say hi!" The middle-aged man laughed, and the vibration from his voice became a medium for his Qi which sent pressure waves towards the group of cultivators from South Star.

"This is not a good way to greet people!" Xu He grunted then flung his sleeves which cut off the Qi waves with his own and relieved the students from the immense pressure.

“Shi Xiaoran, so the Tri-Solar School finally let you lead their team? Humm... They look like a group of young men with great potential. I heard one of your students has even earned the right to be referred to as one of God’s Seven Children. You have been a seven-star condensed prime Warrior for what? Ten years now? You should learn from the younger ones; perhaps they might be able to teach you a thing or two about cultivating!”

Chapter 115: Chosen Ones

The two leaders were caught in a deadlock in the air. One of them gave off an overbearing, violent presence while the other's Qi felt nimble and as light as a breeze.

"They are from Tri-Sol?! No wonder why they are so arrogant. They ranked number seven last year! That red-haired man is their vice-principal, and he is a famous seven-star condensed prime Warrior in this outer region with thirty-six cities! See his red hair? How could I not realize earlier?" Mu Feng whispered to the others.

"I never knew the vice-principal was so strong. He never showed his abilities before... He is actually standing his ground while facing a seven-star condensed prime Warrior, and I would even say he has a slight advantage!"

'How did he just...' All the South Star students were shocked while they admired the presence of each and every one of Tri-Solar School's representatives. They were also curious about why the vice-principal kept such a low profile, and they wondered what else he was hiding.

"Who are God's Seven Children?" Cao Ning whispered.

"They are the seven strongest cultivators under the age of twenty in our province. The holder of this title cycled through the years, but the quality and strength of them remained high. They were all geniuses in their own rights and will always be..." Chen Mo answered. "And the cultivator in Tri-Solar who is honored with the title is called Shi Hun Tian."

The eyes of South Star's cultivators naturally fell on the striking young cultivators next to Shi Xiaoran. One of them, in particular, caught their attention as he was handsome and tall. The primal feather wings behind his back were twice as larger than the others'.

Feeling their gaze, he stared back at the South Star cultivators, and all of them, even Liu Jian and Chen Mo, were intimidated by his fearsome presence. It was at this point when most of the South Star cultivators decided they would not try to win against Tri-Solar School. That they

should do what was necessary to protect themselves, and perhaps lose valiantly.

“God’s Seven Children?” Ye Wei’s eyes lit up as mumbled to himself feeling curious and competitive about the level of strength behinds this seemingly prestigious title. ‘I will have to beat them at some point if I want to go further...’

Chen Mo continued. “Shi Hun Tian is the latest addition, and he is ranked last out of the seven.”

Shi Hun Tian scanned around, and his cold gaze stopped on Ye Wei. “I hope you will be able to entertain me in this year’s tournament!”

Liu Jian, Chen Mo, and the rest were enraged by Shi’s disregard for them, and they all ground their teeth and clenched their fists.

Shi Xiaoran was known for his rash temperament. He did not feel the need to tone down his attitude because Xu He was stronger than him. “We have five cultivators who are seven-star at the Warrior level or above. The worst one of us is a four-star Warrior, and even he knew one of our cultivators was a God’s Child!” He pointed at Chen Mo and said.

“Let’s see what you have here... Only two seven-star Warriors and you brought a one-star Warrior along too! Is this really your best? And that kid over there, does he even know how to spell ‘Qi’? Oh wait, is he one of your relatives you brought here so he can see the big city?” Shi Xianran then pointed at Ye Wei.

“Hahaha! Last year you guys couldn’t even get in top ten in the first stage. I guess history indeed has a way of repeating itself! It was fun at the inter-state stage last year; it’s a shame that you and your school will never get to compete on a stage larger than the provincial fights! I feel bad for you having to lead a group like this.” He shook his head and said in an irritated tone.

Xu He was not angry because he knew from years back that Shi Xianran was a mouthy person. He smiled and said: “It’s too early to brag, you should just focus on keeping the rank you achieved last year. I certainly hope that kid doesn’t lose his title as there are a lot of powerful

contestants this year!”

“Haha, someone is confident! I will see if you can be this calm in a week’s time!” Shi Xianran went back into the golden runicle with his team and drove off.

Just when Xu He told his team to return to their runicle, a sharpness tore a hole in reality as mighty sword Qi fell from the sky. It created a vertical vacuum on its path.

The whole South Star team was shocked, and they all had their guard up as they observed.

A purple robed elderly man with an old sword on his back descended from the sky and next to him was a boy that looked no older than sixteen.

The teen had delicate facial features, and he was dressed in simple clothes which gave off a sharp pulsing force similar to a fine, aged blade. There was a metallic glow around him which twinkled in a mysterious way.

“Zhoutian Sword School, Jian Shi Yu!” Xu He’s pupils dilated. “Greetings master!” There was fear in the vice-principal’s eyes.

Xu He bowed respectfully to the purple-robed elderly man who happened to be one of the strongest swordsman in the province. Within the region, the cultivators who were worthy enough to be compared to Jian Shi Yu were very few indeed; he was one step away from being a returned-prime Warrior.

“Not bad, you look more content and mature since I saw you ten years ago! It looks to me like your team is stronger than it was last year. Did you and Gu Qing work hard on teaching these kids? Hahaha speaking of him, how is old Gu doing?” The purple-robed old man nodded and approached.

“Principal Gu is doing well; he talks about you quite a lot actually.” Xu He said. The principal of Zhoutian Sword School was a good friend of Gu Qing’s so it was only natural that the vice-principal acted like a respectful junior.

“To be honest, it has been more than ten years since the last time I met old Gu. I’ve spent all my time on this little kid here. When the tournament is over, I might go catch up with him, and let him teach this kid a thing or two!” Jian Shi Yu patted the teen who stood next to him and smiled.

Although the teen was in simple clothes, he still stood out. He wore a pleasant smile on his fresh, childish face, and looked tidy and presentable. He bowed to the South Star representatives. “Hello everyone, my name is Jian Chen!”

Beyond his ordinary looks, he radiated a presence that did not match his appearance. Liu Jian, in particular, was very interested in Jian Chen’s Qi. “Nice to meet you!” He humbled himself and replied.

The others also greeted Jian Chen.

Ye Wei too was intrigued by the teen as he could feel the surge of energy hidden in Jian Chen’s meridians was no weaker than Shi Hun Tian’s.

“This is the first provincial tournament Jian Chen is attending?” Vice-principal Xu asked with a friendly smile on his face.

“That is correct” Jian Shi Yu nodded.

“You have taught him well. I have a feeling this kid is going to do well; he should even be able to take a title if he fights with one of the seven!” Vice-principal Xu was not just being nice, he had been analyzing Jian Chen since he first laid eyes on him.

“God’s Seven... Maybe!” Jian Shi Yu smiled. “We are heading off, but let’s sit close to each other at the tournament so we can chat while watching the fights!”

“Take care!” Xu He greeted them.

Jian Shi Yu then flew off in a flash together with Jian Chen.

“Vice-principal, does Zhoutian Sword School only have one representative?” Everyone was curious, and Chen Mo asked after Jian Shi

Yu left.

“It is their tradition to send fewer people the stronger they are, and the fact that they are only sending one this year means they are extremely confident. That teen we just met, he was undoubtedly strong enough to challenge for the God’s Seven title!” Xu He looked at the direction Jian Shi Yu disappeared to and paused then slowly spoke. “That kid resembled a sheathed sword; I look forward to seeing him shine when he unleashes his power.”

The South Star cultivators were startled and doubtful and to them, it was slightly disrespectful and even reckless that a school sent only one cultivator because no matter how strong Jian Chen might be, he was just a young teenager. He would have to face multiple cultivators from different schools. Considering the occasion and the amount of talented individuals that would be participating, they could not picture Jian Chen very far.

“If you kids face Polaris Academy or the Tri-Solar School, in fact, any school of that caliber you have to give it your all and have a good fight. See what will come of it. But if you are up against the Zhoutian Sword School or Galaxy Academy, just concede!” Xu He did not bother explaining more as he was sure these kids would know what he meant when they see these schools.

Galaxy Academy was the reigning champion. Located in the province’s capital Ning City. They had already gotten first place in the tournament for three consecutive years.

Xu He was feeling more ambitious than usual with Ye Wei on the roster, and he was even confident that South Star could come in third, but he was too realistic to dream about squeezing into first or second.

“Qi Xiu from Polaris, Jian Chen from Zhoutian Sword School, Galaxy Academy...” Ye Wei mumbled to himself. He has been calm while seeing all these talented youngsters, but deep in his heart he longed to fight and apply what he has learned from his three years of intense training. That was the only way he could get stronger from this point on.

“We haven’t even reached the state stage yet, and there are already this many people we should pay attention to, can you imagine if we can go further than just our province...” The students were a bit tired from traveling but meeting these new people had woken them up.

The black runcle drove off again, and it sped up becoming a stream of light penetrating the valleys of the Sunset Mountains closing in on Ning City.

Chapter 116: Floating Light

Ning City was the province's capital. It was situated on a plain surrounded by the Sunset Mountains which stretched out more than twenty times the size of Green Moon City. Its landscape was filled with a tight conglomeration of buildings. In the middle of it all, a towering mountain was present.

The mountain in the city's center could not be compared to the mountains which surrounded the area, but it stood out because of its shape. Its silhouette resembled a sloped cylinder, and instead of a sharp peak, there was a wide, flat platform on the mountain's top as if it was cleaved off by a gigantic sword.

There were eighteen amethyst platforms in the middle of the flat mountain, and they were surrounded by rows and rows of small antique jade palaces and houses.

"We've arrived!"

Xu He led all fourteen South Star cultivators out of the runicle, and just as they got out a few Warriors in silver robes ran towards them.

"Would you be the guests from South Star Academy? This way please!" They bowed and quickly led Xu He and the rest to one of the palaces. These three Warriors, along with many others, were responsible for the receiving the competitors on behalf of the City Lord of Ning City.

The palaces Ning City had prepared for the guests were magnificent, and within each of them, there were pavilions, lofts, a garden with a small decorative hill made of rock, pools, and other luxurious facilities. Although the South Star representatives were a group of fifteen, the palace was spacious enough to house all of them with room to spare.

"Don't leave; I will go to the officials and get ahold of the tournament's schedule." Xu He left Liu Jian in charge after making room arrangements and getting everyone situated.

After the vice-principal left some of the students were pacing around

enjoying the tranquility of the spacious palace while others were either cultivating in their rooms or chatting with their fellow students.

“Come!” Ye Wei patted Cai Ning’s shoulder as he signaled the one-star Warrior to follow him.

“Okay.” Cao Ning earnestly nodded. He was then led to the courtyard Ye Wei was assigned to.

Ye Wei ordered Cao Ning to use the stances he knew. Although he was not sure about Ye Wei’s intention, he trusted his friend enough to display his Rolling Stone Punch and the Onyx Tortoise stance without holding anything back.

Strands of runes appeared in the air and shortly after formed a stance. Cao Ning used the Rolling Stone Punch. Ye Wei did not say a word but just nodded with no facial expressions. However, when Cao Ning displayed the Onyx Tortoise stance Ye Wei looked astounded, and there was an undisguised glow of excitement in his eyes.

“The Onyx Tortoise stance was awesome; it has great potential!” Ye Wei patted Cao Ning on the shoulder with a bright smile on his face.

Even though Ye Wei knew many stances at this moment, it was already too late to teach Cao Ning any of them. It would be much more efficient and effective to refine a stance he already knew and get strengthened by the cosmic energy than to learn something completely new.

“What do you mean great potential?” Cao Ning said with a bewildered look on his face as he struggled to comprehend what Ye Wei meant.

“Come back again after sunset, and you will find out what I mean.” Ye Wei laughed. He enjoyed leaving Cao Ning confused. “Haha, just go there are some things I have to think about.”

“Okay...” Cao Ning said as he scratched his head and left the courtyard confused.

“Rolling Stone Punch is pretty mediocre. I can make it into a mid-level Spirit stance at best, but on the other hand, the Onyx Tortoise stance can be developed extensively...” He mumbled to himself as he replayed the

two stances in his head repeatedly. He then decided to focus on studying the runic structure and flow of the Onyx Tortoise stance.

While Ye Wei concentrated on perfecting the Onyx Tortoise stance on the other side of the building, more than ten Polaris cultivators trespassed into the South Star Academy's palace.

"Is this where they are staying? Smells horrible here! Oh well, what do you expect, they have to pick the right place for the right people!" The front gate was kicked open violently as mocking voices as the group entered the premise. They were led by an arrogant looking teenager who had straw dangling from his mouth who gazed around with a disdainfully.

He was followed by a group of black-robed teenagers, and every single one of them had a powerful presence. The cultivators humiliated by Ye Wei were also in this group.

Liu Jian, Chen Mo, Joe Yin, and others came out of their rooms as they heard the noise. When they saw the group entering and the embroidery on their robes, their faces became cold, and they gasped. "Polaris Academy!"

They rushed out of the entrance and glared at the cultivators from Polaris Academy with hostility. Mo Feng, who was knocked down by them, glared at the intruders with rage in his eyes.

None of the South Star students were happy to see the people who had just caused a ruckus at their school no more than three days ago.

"This palace was assigned to South Star Academy; you people have no right to be here and no business here!" Mu Feng stared at the red-haired cultivator who knocked him out in one strike as he shouted with a cold voice.

"These facilities belongs to Galaxy Academy, when did they give this place to South Star?"

"We are all guests of Galaxy Academy, surely were allowed to greet one another?" Ning Yang laughed coldly. "I have to say this palace is in such a

sorry state, but well I guess that's only when compared to what the host prepared for the top ten schools from last year. Like Qi Xiu said, it smells a bit like a pig sty that's all!"

None of the South Star cultivators could stand Ning Yang calling them pigs; they all struggled to remain calm.

"Ning Yang, how can you so shamelessly come here? I thought making you kneel down to us and apologize would have taught you a lesson." One of the students who saw his intrusion a few days back stepped forward and said.

"What, is what they're saying true? You're a disgrace! People like this made you kneel down? Do you know how hard we worked to build a good name for Polaris Academy?!" The teenager with straw in his mouth looked at the South Star cultivators around him then his gaze landed on Ning Yang.

Ning Yang had a stiff look. He ground his teeth as he thought about the shame he was put through. He then shook his head and said, "None of the garbage here was the person who disrespected me."

"What did you call us? Watch your mouth!" Enraged by Ning Yang's words, Liu Jian stepped forward. He raised his sword-shaped brows and glared at the Polaris cultivators, "The reason why you can speak like this today was because I was not there when you came, or else I would have knocked every single tooth out of your filthy mouth and forced you to crawl back to Polaris!"

The atmosphere became heavy as every South Star student at the scene was furious. They all started channeling their Qi ready for a fight to break out any second.

"Pffft, who do you think you are?" The teenager chewed on the straw in his mouth and replied. He stepped forward and without using his hands, a surge of Qi burst from his body towards Liu Jian in the shape of a flying serpent.

A thundering noise sounded as the Qi wave hit Liu Jian, and after taking ten steps backwards he finally regained balance, but his face was white

and a line of blood dripped down from the corner of his mouth.

Everyone from South Star was startled. They couldn't imagine that their best cultivator would struggle so much just taking one hit from this unknown person.

"See what I mean. You should learn to walk the walk before you talk the talk!"

"Who are you?" Liu Jian clutched his chest where he was hit. He was dismayed by the powerful strike as he started to realize he was not a match to the person standing in front.

"I am Qi Xiu of Polaris Academy, just call your best cultivator out to face me. I don't want to waste my time taking out the trash!" He knew how strong these guys stood in front of him were just with one glance, he then immediately lost interest in them.

Qi Xiu's body gave off an exceptional presence that exceeded everyone else there.

'It's him...'

Everyone was scared and looked startled. They didn't think Qi Xiu would be at such a high level; therefore, Liu Jian was afraid that even Ye Wei would not be able to do anything against Qi Xiu. If they were to fall to Qi Xiu's might here, then South Star would become the laughing stock of all other participating teams.

"So you are Qi Xiu? Nevermind, I don't really care who you are, but this palace was assigned to our school, if you don't leave immediately I will have to use force!" Chen Mo took a small step forward as sequences of runes appeared around his body.

"None of you here are worthy enough to fight me just fetch the kid who embarrassed Ning Yang before any of you get hurt! Call him out, and make him kneel and apologize! If he is not here, then I want all of you to kneel down for him!" Qi Xiu chewed on the straw again as his gaze became cold.

"You want us to kneel down for who?" Not all the South Star cultivators

understood what Qi Xiu meant but judging from the aggression in his tone they knew they were in trouble.

“Piss off!” Chen Mo, Zhao Kun, and Zhang Jie pointed at Qi Xiu and shouted.

“You asked for it, now kneel!” Qi Xiu narrowed his eyes and rose his hand, and he then swung it towards Chen Mo. The runes around it flew out and formed eighteen bright Qi fists. ‘Low-level Myst stance – Floating Light Fist!’

The fists of Qi reached the South Star students in a flash, and they traveled too fast for any of them to react. Even Liu Jian and Chen Mo could do nothing more than stare at the approaching Qi fists.

“What was that!”

None of the South Star students anticipated Qi Xiu, who was not condensed-prime Warrior to their knowledge, to use a Myst stance. There was only one explanation, ‘He must have refined the stance himself!’

Ordinary Warriors were mere ants compared to a Warrior who could use Myst stances. For the South Star cultivators fighting Qi Xiu would be as hard as fighting an armed Warrior bare-handed.

The South Star cultivators were not ready to give in. One by one they used their best stances in the hopes that their joint effort would be enough to stop Qi Xiu.

“Golden Scale stance!”

“Scarlett Spirit stance!”

“Fire Spirit Burst!”

Despite the great effort, all of the stances were neutralized by Qi Xiu’s Qi fists.

Chapter 117: First Opponent

Just before the Qi fists landed on the South Star Cultivators, a small hurricane flew between the cultivators and Qi Xiu's stance, and a person appeared.

"Bang! Bang! Bang!"

The person swung his palms around eighteen times, and all eighteen Qi fists disappeared. It was no other than Ye Wei! He left his courtyard when he heard the commotion, only to see a fight had broken out between his classmates and Polaris Academy's students. He saw that his teammates were about to get knocked down by Qi Xiu's Qi fists.

"So you're were looking for me?" Ye Wei said as calm as usual while assessing how strong this teenager with a straw in his mouth was.

"Wei!" Everyone representing South Star was unbelievably shocked, to see Ye Wei, and to see how easy he made it seem to defend against a mid-level Myst stance.

'It was a Myst stance from their best cultivator! How did you...' Liu Jian knew Ye Wei was strong, but now he would never forget the terrifying amount of energy he felt all the way to his bones just now.

"Brother Qi Xiu! That's the kid!" Ning Yang would never forget Ye Wei's face. The fear he felt for Ye Wei had sunk to his bones. He couldn't help tremor from fear and have a shaky voice. He was shocked that someone their age could stop Qi Xiu's Myst stance.

"Ha, you actually stopped it!" Qi Xiu said ignoring Ning Yan. Slowly he stepped forward so he could get a closer look at Ye Wei. He was quite surprised to see a deep glowing shape in Ye Wei's eyes.

"I see how you can force them to bend their knees, but don't you think that was an over-reaction?" Qi Xiu narrowed his eyes at Ye Wei and asked coldly.

"Ones who want to insult others should always be prepared to be insulted. Since they came without manners, I thought I would teach them

some! If we were talking about insults, what do you have to say to the South Star students you people injured for no particular reason?" Ye Wei challenged Qi Xiu's statement.

"Well, well, well!" Qi Xiu glared at Ye Wei, and spat the straw out of his mouth. He got rid of his playful attitude and became serious, "If you believe strength reigns supreme then we should let our strength talk it out!"

The runes around Qi Xiu's body began to spin. He then placed his finger at the end of the rune sequence and started writing twinkling runes against the spin.

"Pfft, about time he uses a stance!" The Polaris Academy cultivators were getting excited at the chance to see Qi Xiu show off his power.

"Hey, do you and your trash school know why where the name Qi Xiu came from?" Ning Yang glared at Ye Wei while smiling mischievously, "The reason why he is called Qi Xiu is because he is the master of seven Myst stances!"

"Fist, palm strike, finger strike, knife, sword, spear, and... Why bother explaining, you will see them soon enough. You can come apologize to me if you ever wake up from your coma! By the way, the Floating Light Fist was only the weakest of his Myst stances!" Ning Yang felt ecstatic in a twisted way. He could already picture Ye Wei and the others asking for mercy while rolling on the ground.

"What!?"

"How can he have mastered so many Myst stances? How is that possible? A Warrior who can use one Myst stance would be considered a beast! How are we supposed to fight someone like that?" Uncontrollable panic overwhelmed Liu Jian, Cheo Mo, and other South Star Academy cultivators as they wondered how strong his strongest stance would be.

"Seven huh? Don't let me down. Let's hope you are as interesting to fight as you make yourself sound!" Ye Wei smiled; he was not shaken at all as if not impressed by what was said.

The fire of competitiveness lit up in Ye Wei. His blood boiled as his body had been thirsting to fight someone of this caliber for a long while.

‘Low-level Myst stance – Incineration Palm!’ Qi Xiu glared at Ye Wei and said as a sequence of a few hundred runes appeared in the air.

“Rumble!”

Before the stance even took shape, its scorching temperature spread outwards from the runes sequence. The pulsing energy pushed both school’s cultivators backwards.

Everyone but Ye Wei, who was still just standing casually. He let the hot streams of Qi blow onto his face. He did not let his guard down as he searched for weaknesses on his opponent’s stance by feeling the blazing Qi flow.

“Got you!” Qi Xiu grunted as clouds of hot Qi turned into fiery palm strikes that rained down on Ye Wei!

Waves of scorching heat closing upon Ye Wei and the air started to smell burnt as the palms crashed towards Ye Wei’s head, chest, stomach, and other vulnerable parts of his body.

“Careful!” Joe Yin and Cao Ning shouted worryingly.

‘Driftwind Steps!’

Ye Wei’s figure disappeared into a wave of Qi and reappeared twenty meters to the side of where he was. He drew a growing rune sequence while he was dodging the Incineration Palm.

‘Root Prison!’ As Qi Xiu felt a strong suction on his feet, Ye Wei’s fist was already in front of his body.

“Impressive speed!” Qi Xiu narrowed his eye and clenched his right hand into a fist then threw it towards Ye Wei.

The blazing palm Qi was put out by the force wave given off from the clash of fists.

Qi Xiu took five steps back, and Ye Wei took three. The ‘Qi-less’ cultivator seemed to have an advantage.

Both groups of cultivators were deeply shocked by the level of cultivation they just witnessed. Qi Xiu's Incineration Palm was impressive, but how Ye Wei deflected it and delivered a counterpunch to threaten Qi Xiu was also astonishing.

Furthermore, they were aware that those two were only testing the waters with their toes and that the real fight would be on a completely different scale.

Liu Jian was left in awe as he clenched his fist tight. As for Ning Yang and other Polaris cultivators, their jaws dropped so much that eggs could fit in their mouths. They did not think anyone would be able to have an advantage over Qi Xiu's Myst stance.

"I must admit that you are strong, and South Star Academy has actually surprised me this year, but there is no way you can beat me!" The seriousness on Qi Xiu's face grew, and his Qi intensified. He fired up his Incineration Palm again and this time around the Qi flames were burning even hotter.

"How would you know before I actually beat you?" There was no fear in Ye Wei's eyes as his competitive spirit grew. He stepped forward again, getting ready to counter whatever Qi Xiu had in store for him!

Just before Ye Wei could react, a pressuring presence descended from the sky.

"Who dare make trouble in South Star territory!?" A thundering voice boomed in everyone's ears as a force field as heavy as a mountain reached the ground.

"Swoosh!"

Qi Xiu's blazing Qi immediately dispersed disappeared under the immense pressure.

"Hmm, Polaris Academy students are getting increasingly confident about themselves!" Xu He's voice froze everyone's blood as his hysterical eyes fell on Qi Xiu and the other intruders. They stepped backwards outside Xu He's reach. To the vice-principal, an eight-star condensed

prime Warrior could easily crush every single one of the Polaris cultivators like an ant with no exceptions.

Nobody expected the vice-principal to arrive out of the blue, and Qi Xiu's face turned dark as he gazed at Ye Wei. "We will continue where we left off today in the tournament! Then we will find out who of us is stronger!"

"Anytime." Ye Wei said calmly. He knew their fight was unavoidable, and he looked forward to seeing Qi Xiu showing all he was capable of.

"Goodbye!" Qi Xiu grunted and led his schoolmates out.

"Get out of here! Your vice-principal will hear about this!" Xu He flicked his sleeve and sent a Qi wave that threw them out of the guest palace's gate.

"Run!"

Qi Xiu then led the Polaris Academy's students back to their palace.

Xu He had great self-control, and although he could have beaten all the intruders with a flick of his finger, he knew what the consequences would be and how others would misunderstand his intentions.

"All of you gather up!"

Vice-principal led all fourteen South Star cultivators into the sitting area.

"I've received the fight schedules and learned who your opponents will be, and Polaris Academy is going to be our first opponent!" Xu He said as he opened the scroll in his head and announced in a concerned tone.

"The first match-up is a grudge match? Interesting!" Liu Jian was ready for war after having been taunted by Polaris Academy twice in a few days. All the South Star cultivators were dying to vent their anger.

'That Qi Xiu though...' Some of the cultivators were less optimistic after seeing Polaris Academy's ace display just a small portion of what he was capable of.

"Qi Xiu is all yours." Xu He looked at Ye Wei.

“Yea.” Ye Wei nodded calmly.

Chapter 118: Gathering of Talents

“If Ye Wei can defeat Qi Xiu then that basically means we can contest for one of the top three spots! You are our team’s trump card. Whether we can rank high, all depends on how and when you take the stage. Suffice it to say, the later the better!” Xu He looked at Ye Wei and said.

‘What an interesting kid...’ Xu He mumbled quietly to himself. He wasn’t able to get an accurate impression of Ye Wei because one cannot simply read the Qi attribute of a Supernova users stance, but from the fighting he saw, he knew that Ye Wei was no weaker than Qi Xiu to say the least.

“This tournament is a big event in our province as you all know... Not only will Ning City’s own City Lord be in attendance, but other powers and influential martial families will be there too.”

“If you display enough strength, there is a chance you will be taken in by one of these powers which have influence throughout the whole Qing state! If you are lucky, even the City Lord might recruit you.”

“It’s no exaggeration to say that this tournament will affect your future long after you graduate!” Xu He kept eye contact with everyone and said solemnly. As the vice-principal, there was nothing he could be more proud of than knowing his students would do well when they leave school.

“That’s enough talk for now rest your bodies, and do your best tomorrow!” Xu He waved his hand to dismiss the young cultivators.

“Okay!” Every one of them sounded motivated, and they nodded as they left the hall heading back to their own rooms. They were full of hopes and expectations, and they felt pressured as they knew what happens tomorrow on the martial stage would shape their future.

“Ye Wei. Stay behind!”

The vice-principal caught Ye Wei just before he left. “Ye Wei, judging from that duel what do you think your chances are if you fight Qi Xiu

again?” He whispered feeling reluctant and frustrated. Being the eight-star condensed prime Warrior he was, he was used to knowing people’s cultivation level when he saw them. He was embarrassed that he struggled to judge how strong a kid from his school was. Furthermore, the vice-principal was planning to rank the school in top ten; therefore, in order to strategize properly, he would have to know how strong Ye Wei was.

“About that... I am actually not sure. I don’t know how much he was holding back, but I will do my best in any case.” Ye Wei paused then spoke after thinking about it. He didn’t know exactly how strong Qi Xiu was, but at the same time, he didn’t know how powerful he would be under Supernova stance.

“Okay then. When he gets on the platform, you will be up!” Xu He nodded, “Very well. You should go rest. In the earlier match-ups, it would be best for you to hide as much as possible. As our ace, you can not let others know exactly how strong you are if you want us to go far! I would like us to aim for third place!”

Because of obstacles like Galaxy Academy and Zhoutian Sword School, Xu He did not expect South Star to get first or second place.

“Understood!” Ye Wei nodded and went back to his room. His target was not the top three, he wanted to go higher and further, and even his personal tutor, Master Yi, didn’t know how strong Ye Wei actually was.

Whenever Master Yi gave Ye Wei time to rest, he would go to the Glacial Temple and learn what the Glacial Emperor had left behind. Apart from Ye Wei himself, the only being who knew how strong Ye Wei was would be Pu Yuan, the Glacial Emperor’s old disciple.

On a pathway not far away, the Polaris cultivators were on their way back to their palace, and none of them looked pleased.

“Brother Qi Xiu, how strong was Ye Wei?” Ning Yang couldn’t help but ask. In the past Qi Xiu always dealt with his opponents casually and effortlessly. He only ever had to pay more attention to the God’s Seven

Children when he fought, but this time, he used two Myst stances in a row and both of them had been countered. This shook the Polaris cultivators' confidence.

"I really don't know!" There was a deep glow in Qi Xiu's eyes, "That kid has hidden his cultivation very well, but I will make sure he is the one who falls tomorrow! I'll let him see the result of all my hard work!"

Ning Yang could sense that Ye Wei was much more powerful than when he saw him at South Star's front gate. He was under the impression that Ye Wei was not so far ahead of himself. He was still shocked to find out that even the Warrior he admired since he started school was not able to take Ye Wei down. 'Even Qi Xiu is concerned about fighting him... But that kid was no older than sixteen!'

At sunset, Cao Ning walked on the floor decorated by orange sunlight and followed Ye Wei's instruction to meet at the courtyard.

"You're here?" Ye Wei was seated in the lotus position in the middle of the yard. He nodded smilingly at Cao Ning.

"Wei, why did you want us to meet?"

"Just use the Rolling Stone Punch. Write out the runes, but do not activate the stance!" Ye Wei said forwardly. He did nothing to expel the confusion on Cao Ning's face.

"Okay!" Cao Ning nodded. Trusting as he was, he immediately started drawing a sequence of runes as he was told to.

The Rolling Stone Punch was an ordinary low-level Spirit stance. For a one-star Warrior like Cao Ning, to only know two stances of this level was something considered an embarrassment; something higher tiered Students would look down on.

That was the pain to be a cultivator from an ordinary background. Even though some of them might be talented and work hard as horses, they would only be as strong as mediocre cultivators from martial families.

"Move that rune three inches to your left!" Ye Wei was focused on the runes in front of Cao Ning, and his smile disappeared as he got in the

zone. 'Precision, efficient... Like Master told me.'

"Yes!" Cao Ning nodded. He was smiling brightly once he realized that Ye Wei seemed to be capable of refining mystic stances. 'Is he already a Runemaster?! I guess it's only natural if he is Master Yi's legacy apprentice...' Cao Ning wondered what he did in his past life to deserve such a friend.

Cao Ning then moved the rune Ye Wei was pointing at exactly three inches to the side.

"Zoom!"

All thirty-eight runes shone brighter and vibrated after the one rune was moved. Cao Ning has been practicing this stance for years, and he could clearly feel that the energy flow within was stronger than all the other times he had used this stance. 'This is peak-level energy! He only moved one rune and made Rolling Stone Punch a peak low-level Spirit stance?'

"Calm your mind; let go of other distractions!" Ye Wei scolded coldly as he could see Cao Ning was not focused from his shaking fingers.

Cao Ning immediately took a deep breath and got rid of the random thoughts as he stabilized his body.

"This rune here. Swap it with the one to its right and move it down four inches!" Ye Wei had a serious look on his face as he pointed at more runes knowing where the flaws were.

Cao Ning carefully moved the runes like he was told, and he could feel the energy flow within the rune sequence was reaching the strength of a forbidden stance.

"And the last one!" Cao Ning was excited and smiling, but Ye Wei's face remained straight while pointed at the last problematic rune, "Disperse this rune, but be careful. When you do it, all the other runes have to stay exactly how they are!"

To make a rune disappear without affecting the rest of the rune sequence was easier said than done. When Cao Ning made the last rune

disappear, all the other runes in the sequence went dim marking the end of a failed attempt.

“I’m sorry!”

Cao Ning looked at the dimmed sequence and bit his lips. He was feeling down as he faced the ground. He couldn’t quite believe he failed although he was paying his full attention.

“It’s okay. You did very well; let’s go again!” Ye Wei patted Cao Ning’s shoulder encouraging him.

“Yeah!” Cao Ning rose his head and ground his teeth as he nodded determinedly.

After six more failed attempts and a few more changes, Cao Ning’s Sentient and dantian were exhausted. Finally, he succeeded on his seventh attempt with almost no energy left. With Ye Wei’s help, he was able to make the Rolling Stone Punch a peak mid-level Spirit stance from a simple low-level one.

Because it was a whole level of refinement, this caused cosmic energy to descend from the sky. A milky-white beam of light engulfed Cao Ning nourishing and strengthening his body; it cleansed his Sentient and dantian transforming him at an incredible speed.

When the pillar of light faded, a cracking sound was heard from Cao Ning’s body. He felt the transformation of his body and started laughing hysterically.

“I... I broke through! I just broke through!” Cao Ning said incoherently. His face was as red as a ripe tomato.

With Cao Ning’s level of talent and because he was without any external resources it would have taken him at least one or two years to become a two-star Warrior; therefore, he was extremely grateful for Ye Wei’s help.

“It’s only natural that you get this much cosmic energy. We’ve improved the Rolling Stone Punch to a higher level.” Ye Wei said with a faint smile on his face.

Know that he was running out of time to prepare, Ye Wei started training himself. He channeled his Qi through his meridians while giving tips to Cao Ning regarding the refinement of the Onyx Tortoise stance. The fact that it had greater potential only meant that there was more to be done.

Dawn arrived, and Galaxy Academy's establishment on the mountain was amongst the first places in the city to see the new day's sun. Shortly after, drops of golden light eventually illuminated the rest of Ning City.

The flat mountain top became a busy place. The arena was teeming with visitors and groups of different school's representatives, and all of the passages were stationed with fully armed guards sent by the City Lord. They ensured the safety of the venue during the tournament. Which just confirmed the rumor that the City Lord was going to attend this year's tournament in person.

Apart from the City Lord, there were other important guests as well, and even someone high up in the Green Army would be here to scout for talent!

After a simple breakfast, Xu He led the fourteen South Star cultivators towards the eighteen martial platforms.

Chapter 119: City Lord Chen Yuan

All thirty-six teams representing their outskirts city were gathered around the martial platforms. Everyone was trying to figure out how strong everyone else was, and the exchange of looks were not all that friendly.

The young cultivators were running around exchanging information.

“I heard that Zhoutian Sword School only sent one person this year!”

“I know that kid’s name, Jian Chen. He fought five ten-star Warriors simultaneously in a sparring match and won! Their school has never fallen out of top three, and I’m guessing that this year will be no exception.”

“What!? Are you serious? Do you think they have a chance at first place this year then?”

“Well, you can’t just write off Galaxy Academy like that as three of the God’s Seven are on their team!”

The moment their title was mentioned looks of envy and admiration appeared on the young cultivators’ faces as they heard the title they dreamed of gaining; it was the reason they trained so hard.

With two opposing schools assigned to one martial platform, It was the first time since last year cultivators from all thirty-six schools gathered in the same place. Other than the God’s Seven, who would be the strongest out of each school was another hot topic.

Young cultivators from South Star and Polaris Academy were glaring at each other with rage and hostility in their eyes.

Qi Xiu was standing around a hundred meters away from Ye Wei, and he was wickedly glaring at his recent opponent.

“Is that Qi Xiu?”

“Yeah, he is strong enough to fight the God’s Seven. A couple of days ago, he came to Ning City before the tournament started just to challenge

Xuan Yu, the third strongest of the seven. They fought for a whole hour, and Qi Xiu lost just by a small margin. If he could fire out just one more stance he could have won the fight, but he lost valiantly. I'd say if he challenged any of the weaker seven, he might actually be one of them right now!"

"Wow, kudos to his courage and confidence to challenge the third best young cultivator of the region as well as the fact that he lasted an hour!"

"Polaris' opponent, though, South Star Academy, is ranked a tier lower! I doubt this match-up will last long."

"South Star Academy? The school that got eliminated in the first round last year? I heard their best cultivator is called Liu Jian... Wanna bet how long it will take Qi Xiu to beat him? I say he will not even last one stance!"

"I say two stance exchanges!"

Liu Jian's face turn pale as he overheard conversations between the speculating cultivators from other schools.

The Polaris cultivators looked at Liu Jian and the others and laughed. Although Ye Wei's strength was beyond what they expected, Qi Xiu did say he was confident he could take care of the new face; they all trusted the master of seven Myst stances!

The atmosphere was thick enough to be cut with a knife, as the fights would start soon. All the cultivators were restlessly checking out their opponents.

"Welcome, everyone!!" A rich, thick voice vibrated the air. It wasn't loud, but it could somehow be heard clearly by all the cultivators and the teachers leading them. They all looked respectfully towards where the voice came from and saw a middle-aged man with his hands crossed behind his back.

He was wearing a simple green robe and had a gentle smile, and while there was no Qi disturbance around him, his elegant presence and posture made enough of an impression that everyone who saw him

wanted to bow in reverence. This was the City Lord of Ning City. The leader and the only returned prime Warrior of the province.

At the Battle of Trapped Beast City Lord Chen singled-handedly destroyed more than six-hundred condensed prime demons during the pivotal fight. The returned prime Warrior was rumored to have achieved that with strength to turn rocks to dust and part rivers bare-handed. Many also believed that Chen Feng was a descendant of Supreme Chen Feng and that he was powerful because of his Supreme bloodline.

“Greetings your lordship!”

“Greetings your lordship!”

At the Martial Square, school leaders followed by the youngsters bowed to the City Lord.

“Welcome everyone to this year’s tournament. I am sure you have been told the rules but if you haven’t they are as follows: scrolls, arms, pills, or any other kinds of external aids are prohibited on the martial platforms!”

“If any contestant violate the rules and they do not obey judges’ decisions, your whole school will be disqualified and ejected from the premise by force!” Chen Yuan’s voice echoed throughout the square and in the minds of the audiences. The message was said in a calm tone and there was a magnetism to it that made it fearsome.

“So this is what a returned prime Warrior look like? What is this bone chilling feeling?” Moved by the magnificent presence of Chen Yuan, Ye Wei wanted to bow down and worship the City Lord.

‘No! If I want to become strong, I can not fear or bow to anyone! Not even a returned prime Warrior can get me on my knees without a fight!’ Ye Wei’s determination was rock solid. He clenched his fist, and the golden presence of the Mystic Mount in his Sentient unshackled the chains of fear.

As Ye Wei’s mind cleared up, his body felt light. He could also feel his Sentient was closer to a major breakthrough.

Ye Wei’s eyes started to clear up too, and he could see that Liu Jian,

Chen Mo, Mu Feng, Joe Yin, and other weaker Warriors were tamed by Chen Yuan's bewitching presence as their faces displayed fear. Only a handful of youngsters were able to break the mental shackle and kept their minds clear while the condensed prime Warriors like Xu He and other school leaders were obviously unaffected.

Ye Wei then felt a penetrating gaze on him. Chen Yuan's presence did not only work on a physical level; it was psychologically challenging too. This was intentional so the City Lord could see which young cultivators he should keep an eye on. He looked around and gave everyone who kept their mind clear a nod of approval.

Other than Qi Xiu, Jian Chen, and other faces he was told by the vice-principal to keep an eye on, there was also a dark-skinned teenager who caught Ye Wei's attention.

Ye Wei could tell from the person's uniform that he was looking at someone from the School of Seven Stars, and he knew from the gossip that they ranked thirty-fourth out of thirty-six schools in the last tournament which meant they were in the bottom three.

But for some reason, the dark-skinned teenager gave off a strange presence which was ultimately what Ye Wei was extremely curious about. He noticed Ye Wei glancing at him, and they exchanged a look.

Chen Yuan grunted as he removed the mental shackle, and the clouded minds of the weaker cultivators became clear once more. "Now let the tournament begin! Please honor the spirit of positive and fair competition!" He said with arms folded behind his back; his gentle smile never fell from his face.

"Let's go!"

All the contestants then stepped onto the eighteen battle platforms as they revised their strategies one last time. They were all waiting for the signal so they could start fighting.

Just when the contestants positioned themselves to fight the sky began to darken, and more than two hundred cultivators flew towards the platforms. All of them were condensed prime Warriors or stronger.

They came from different forces, martial families, and also the Green Army; the audience of today was full of various important figures.

Chen Yuan looked at them and nodded. He lifted his hand up and clenched his fist and the clouds above the mountain began to gather. They turned into a circular-shaped platform with a hole in the middle then sequences of runes appeared on the clouds. The runes shaped the white fluff into seats and tables on top which fine wines and spirit fruits appeared.

“Please be seated!” The City Lord looked at the guests who arrived late and said politely.

He then led them to the cloud platform and sat on the seat in the middle.

“They have gotten stronger this year haven’t they!”

“Look at these youngsters, they all look pretty confident. I’m looking forward to seeing how long they can keep that up.” The guests on the cloud platform started speculating and chatting while some of the City Lord’s closer friends walked up to him and greeted him.

Chapter 120: Materializing

Everyone was soon seated and they kept talking enthusiastically about what they expected to see and the rumors regarding this year's contestants.

"This year's tournament will be interesting for sure! My men told me that there was a kid from Polaris Academy called Qi Xiu who challenged the seven famous Warriors of Ning City in quick succession and then finally lost to Xuan Yu in a very close fight!" Said the Mo Patriarch, one of the four most influential families in Ning City. His eyes fell onto martial platform number ten, and he smiled as he spotted Qi Xiu from the large crowd. 'Xuan Yu was born into one of Ning City's super families kudos to Qi Xiu for holding his own against such an opponent!'

"I like this kid! I hope you guys don't fight me over him!" The Mo Patriarch laughed as he boldly expressed his desire to recruit Xi Qiu.

There were no less than thirty patriarchs from different martial families who came here with the same purpose; to recruit youngsters with potential.

"Ha, if you say so Mo Patriarch! That Qi Xiu from Polaris isn't half bad but there are plenty more young talents for the rest of us to pick from! For example, I heard we should be expecting a good show from Shi Hun Tian. The newest addition to the God's Seven!"

"Oh and then there is Jian Chen from Zhoutian Sword School. Principal Jian only brought one youngster with him this year and knowing that old bones' temper this kid has to be something special."

"Don't forget about the obvious. Galaxy Academy came in first in the last three consecutive years, and each of their seven representatives stand out on their own! Not to mention three of God's Seven are in their lineup as well"

While the martial families were laughing and discussing the tournament, a few high-ranked Green Army officers were listening in. The golden armor they wore made them sit straighter than anyone else on

the cloud platform, and they too were excited waiting to be dazzled but they were taking it very seriously because the recruits they find here could have a lasting impressions on the Green Army and possible even the Zhou dynasty as well.

The families leaders then sat back and filled their wine glasses waiting to see the young cultivators fight their hearts out for different reasons. Most of them focused on the famous new faces; Shi Hun Tian, a new God's Seven from Tri-Solar School, Qi Xiu from Polaris Academy, Jian Chen from Zhoutian Sword School, and their eyes naturally were directed at Galaxy Academy's platform where they would be fighting.

"There will not be much suspense watching platform ten. Polaris came third last year without Qi Xiu! And South Star was not even in the top ten. Didn't they come twelfth or thirteenth?" The Mo Patriarch looked at both schools' lineup and said with a sense of contempt.

"Well it really is bad luck for them to face the likes of Polaris Academy in the first round!"

"Yeah, sadly, they can only go downhill from here. Their morale will go down the drain if they get trashed this early! Emotional factors count for a lot when you are this young! Hahaha!"

It was blatantly obvious that no one was even thinking about South Star Academy, most probably didn't even know they existed!

The tournament rules had not changed over the years regarding the number of contestants each team could have. Each school was allowed to send no more than fifteen students who would fight on stage one by one by elimination. Therefore, the team with the last man standing on the platform would win. With the rules as such there was a certain degree of flexibility for the teams. Although it was inevitably advantageous to show your power in the earlier stages, but when it came to the ranking fights it was always each team's best kept secrets, or cultivators in this case, that made the difference.

Down on platform ten Qi Xiu smiled mischievously: "He Chong, you are up!" Qi Xiu waved his arm and a black-robed, fresh-looking teenager

walked out of the group of eighteen young cultivators. He Chong was the weakest of the whole group as he had only reached the three-star Warrior level.

‘He was as tough as Yuan Yu was...’ Qi Xiu was not in a hurry to fight Ye Wei, and he sat all the way in the back meditating. Allowing no space for error, he channeled his Qi and circulated it through his body, so he would be in great condition when he had to face Ye Wei.

“Eh? Qi Xiu is meditating? With his strength he can probably crush South Star on his own, why is he playing it so safe?” Up above on the cloud platform, the Mo Patriarch frowned as he noticed Qi Xiu was acting extra cautious. With his mind set on recruiting Qi Xiu, it was hard for him to take his eyes off platform ten.

Each powerful figure had someone they wanted to see fight, and as the teams began to fight, apart from the Mo Patriarch, there were hardly anyone paying attention to the Polaris – South Star matchup.

“Let me take the first fight!” Cao Ning felt competitive as he had been eager to prove himself since his breakthrough.

“Get out of the way!” Xiao Qi pushed Cao Ning to the side and leaped onto the martial platform.

Ye Wei frowned and mumbled when he saw Xiao Qi taking the stage, “His Qi feels bloated. I bet he got all his cultivation from pills and this idiot didn’t even bother consolidating it into his system. I don’t really see Xiao Qi winning this even though he will be fighting the weakest Polaris student.” There was great depth in Ye Wei’s gaze and a flash of gold in his eye.

Xiao Qi couldn’t even be compared to Cao Ning at this point because the harder working the cultivator the the more cosmic energy he would receive thus causing them to form an even greater foundation. With his body cleansed by one of the purest form of energy in the world, although Cao Ning was only a two-star Warrior comparing to Xiao Qi’s three, he was still the more powerful out of the two.

Ye Wei was aware that his real competition was Qi Xiu, and like Qi Xiu,

he also sat at the back and focused on warming up his body.

It was the same story on other platforms. All the stronger cultivators of each team sat behind their teams while the weaker cultivators went onto the platforms to test strengths and weaknesses of the other team. They tried to get as much information on their opponent as they could.

Although they knew they will eventually be beaten up by the stronger cultivators, they were still fighting with all their heart.

Xiao Qi entered the platform with a swagger, and he immediately used one of his favourite mid-level Spirit stances, but because of his weaker foundation, he was not able to follow through. He couldn't make another stance nor could he properly defend himself and he was very soon hit on the chest by a vigorous palm strike and clumsily fell to the ground while coughing up blood.

"Hahaha! Was that it? He is a three-star Warrior, right? I could hit as hard as he just did and make my Qi last twice as long when I was a two-star Warrior!" Seeing how crisp and easily Xiao Qi was beaten, the Polaris cultivators started laughing without restraint.

"Waste of space!" Liu Jian's face turned ashen as he glared at Xiao Qi.. He was disgusted by the incompetence. "Can someone useful get up there?!"

Cao Ning volunteered, and after struggling for a while, he actually managed to defeat He Chong. The South Star's cultivators were shocked to learn that Xiao Qi was inferior to a schoolmate they had barely heard of.

Xiao Qi was going to come up with some kind of excuse for his quick defeat, but he felt too ashamed to say anything after Cao Ning collected a victory from the opponent who knocked him down so effortlessly.

In the following fights both sides managed to defeat their opponents. Liu Jian was beaten by Ning Yang, but then Ning Yang surprisingly lost to Chen Mo. Both teams were starting to get into a frenzy as the pressure was rising.

Cao Ning and Liu Jian were now heavily injured as they both limped off the platform with bruises on their faces and the rest of their body. Chen Mo also fell to the Polaris fighters' fierce aggression.

"South Star is not as bad as I thought they would be!" The Mo Patriarch said as he overlooked the martial platforms from above, and his eyes finally fell onto Qi Xiu again. 'He's cautious because of this boy at the back?' The patriarch looked towards Ye Wei when he noticed where Qi Xiu was looking.

A group of Galaxy Academy's ordinary students were attracted by the fight between South Star and Polaris and started to gather around platform ten.

"Looks like that's it for South Star, they only have one person left on their bench but there are five from Polaris! Man, I was looking forward to seeing this Polaris boy fight, that Qi Xiu who challenged our Xuan Yu and lost by a hair."

"Yea well, we can always come back to watch their second matchup."

"Hey do you guys feel that too? What the hell there is no Qi in that last person on South Star's bench."

"He has to have a death wish if he is even considering getting on the platform."

"Don't make a decision so quickly, the fact that Qi Xiu is warming up means that he feels threatened."

"What do you mean? You can mean he finds this Qi-less cultivator threatening?"

Ye Wei looked at Cao Ning. 'Although he lost convincingly in the end, he should have gained some valuable combat experience.' He thought as he stood up, and slowly walked towards the platform and said dismissively, "Hey, do you want to fight me as a group? This has been dragged out for way too long."

Qi Xiu was the only person on the other team that concerned Ye Wei, and fighting these other one-sided fights was a complete waste of time.

“Wow this kid’s teeth are sharp! He has no respect for Qi Xiu at all!”

Being called out Qi Xiu stopped cultivating and stepped forth, “Everyone step back!” He said with glaring coldly at Ye Wei. “I am going to make you kneel for me!”

“I could say the same!” Ye Wei said calmly as his eyes locked onto Qi Xiu.

“Who is this? I have never seen anyone drive Qi Xiu this mad.”

“I have no idea. I couldn’t even tell you his initials, but I know which school he goes to! Haha!”

The gathering Galaxy Academy students were all speculating and discussing why Qi Xiu displayed the same level of stress they saw when he challenged Xuan Yu.

“I admit I underestimated you, but today I will make sure you realize how far ahead of you I am!” A layer of silver energy formed on Qi Xiu’s body, and he then stretched out his fingers and channeled his Qi to his palm.

With a cracking noise, the Qi in Qi Xiu’s hand turned into a three foot long sword. The ability to materialize Qi into a physical form was a sign of a cultivator being at the peak of the ten-star Warrior rank or above.

The sword’s formation stirred up a whirlwind around it with its tip pointing to the ground as the cold, sharp blade reflected the morning sun into the audience’s eyes.

Though confident, Ye Wei was extremely cautious. “Nice form!” He exclaimed, and then stepped onto the platform and stomped the floor. The amethyst cracked and the web of fissures grew from his foot as a surge of silvery Qi burst out of his body. The layer was then cemented onto the will-force on his body, forming a glowing light armor.

“Materializing Qi!” Liu Jian, Chen Mo, and other cultivators from South Star were shocked to find out how strong this mysterious boy fighting alongside them was, a peak ten-star Warrior!

Chapter 121: Selenic Descend

Ye Wei kept his abilities hidden, and still one could not sense any Qi from his body. No one really knew how strong he was until just now when he formed the light armor over his body. Now, Ye Wei's teammates finally got a rough idea about his monstrous level of cultivation.

"Peak ten-star Warrior?! This youngster from South Star is not ordinary at all! No wonder Qi Xiu is taking this so seriously, he must have fought him at South Star before!" On the sides of the platform students from Galaxy Academy were surprised that they actually had to swallow their words regarding South Star Academy, but on the other hand they couldn't help but admire the shiny Qi armor on Ye Wei's body.

Ordinary ten-star Warriors could not be compared to their peak-level counterparts, not physically and certainly not mentally. Young cultivators of that level were a rare sight even in top schools like Galaxy Academy.

"Hey everyone! This match is heating up." The Mo Patriarch notified the others as the clashing of two young elite cultivators was by no means a normal sight this early in the tournament. Nearly everyone on the cloud platform glanced over to platform ten, and upon seeing what was happening they were astonished. It even caught the City Lord's interest while the cultivators from the Green Army pointed their scared faces towards Ye Wei and Qi Xiu watching how the match would unfold.

The big names were refreshed and interested. "I can't believe South Star has a peak ten-star Warriors in their team!" The fights between less powerful cultivators were too bland to keep their attention.

"Well I still think Qi Xiu has the edge!" The Mo Patriarch replied in a playful tone while observing. He became increasingly biased without even noticing.

"Humph!" Feeling the intensity of Qi in Ye Wei's light armor, a slightly concerned look flashed through Qi Xiu's face. He then grunted and held his sword even tighter.

"Zoom! Zoom! Zoom!"

They heavy sword gently rattled, as the whirlwind around it turned green causing a windblade to appear around the sword's sharp edge. This blade left an uneven cut on the amethyst stage.

Both Ye Wei and Qi Xiu's presence was expanding and stirring up a wind that quickly grew larger than the platform. The contestants from both schools and the audience near by all had to take a few steps back. They were surprised to see how much stronger Ye and Qi were than they expected and imagined.

"You're dead!" Qi Xiu broke the heavy silence as he stomped the ground and turned into a shadow. He tilted his sword forward to minimize drag and under the watchful eyes of everyone present he pounced towards Ye Wei with the posture of a bloodthirsty wild beast.

The dense, sharp windblade left a green trail of light in the air, and it carved a deep groove on the amethyst ground as Qi Xiu approached his opponent at an incredible speed.

Ye Wei watched the approaching threat with an intense gaze, and with a gentle tap of his toes he shifted to the left effortlessly dodging the falling sword as he let Qi Xiu pass to his side.

The two bumped shoulders and exchanged an aggressive look. Ye Wei didn't miss the chance to impose a counterattack as his silver fist flew towards Qi Xiu's right side. 'I didn't train for three years to be beaten by someone like you!' His eyes shone with a determined glow.

Qi Xiu's remained calm as he swung his sword horizontally towards Ye Wei's neck. The windblade left the sword and flew to the target before the sword itself was even close to Ye Wei.

Qi Xiu's killing intent was clear to all present as he followed through with his aggression. He recognized Ye Wei as a real threat. Ye Wei grunted, and the light armor plates slid and rearranged themselves with a couple extra layers stacked around his neck.

Ye Wei felt comfortable enough to just put his neck to the oncoming strike, and keep up the aggression with his heavy punches.

Sensing an intense pressure approaching as Ye Wei's fist got closer and closer, Qi Xiu's face changed. He didn't expect Ye Wei to react in such controversial manner as if being cut on the neck was not a big deal at all. Qi Xiu quickly moved his sword to defend himself. Just before Ye Wei's fist was about to land on his ribcage, he managed to place the sword between the fist and his body.

“Bang!”

Qi Xiu's windblade was the first to land, and a shower of blinding sparks burst forth from Ye Wei's neck as Qi Xiu dragged his blade against the light armor making a shrill grinding sound.

The windblade could not penetrate the strengthened armor, and it only left behind a scratch before it dispersed from the impact. Within a second his punch landed on Qi Xiu's sword.

The Qi sword in Qi Xiu's hand vibrated from the force behind Ye Wei's punch, and it was showing signs of collapsing.

Qi Xiu felt a numbing pain between his thumb and index finger immediately after he loosened his grip he felt the penetrating force of Ye Wei's fist was not stopping. He therefore twisted and spun his body to avoid the overwhelming force. He couldn't help but lost his footing, and he was forced to take three steps back before regaining his balance.

“You can't get away!” Ye Wei did not leave Qi Xiu any breathing space. His fist was as determined as its owner. It struck once again at the same target, and the pressure wave created a strong wind that forced Qi Xiu's loose black robe to his skin.

Ye Wei figured out that when facing opponents like Qi Xiu it was important to keep applying pressure, or else, he would never find any openings or weaknesses he could take advantage of.

Qi Xiu's pupils dilated. He could not believe Ye Wei remained unharmed after taking the heavy sword blow on the neck, and even more so that Ye Wei could deliver such a powerful counter strike. He channeled his Qi and quickly pulled the sword back leaving a green trail in the air.

Ye Wei's fist cut through the heavy atmosphere again with a shrill noise. The second punch also landed on Qi Xiu's sword. As it did it bent the sturdy-looking sword to an unnatural curve threatening its integrity.

"Bang!"

'His strength is incredible!' Qi Xiu's face turned pale as he took one step after another backwards, and finally he managed to stabilize ten meters away from where he was hit. He started panting and glaring at Ye Wei with unprecedented concern in his eyes.

The Polaris team remembered seeing this extremely stressful expression on Qi Xiu's face when he faced the third strongest of the God's Seven Xuan Yu. 'Ye Wei gave him a pressure that was no less intense than Xuan Yu's. Maybe Ye Wei's strength was similar to Xuan Yu? Qi Xiu is not looking like his normal self at all...'

"It is not looking good for Qi Xiu!"

The Polaris Academy cultivators stood at the back with dropped jaws. Although they knew Qi Xiu has yet to show his full strength, seeing him in a disadvantaged position brewed storms in their hearts.

"Astonishing!" Further away from the platform, the speculating Galaxy Academy students were shocked. They could feel with their faces the brisk wind generated by Ye Wei's fist. The pain on their skin told them the dark horse of this year's tournament came from Green Moon City, and there shouldn't be a problem for South Star to get into top ten.

The angle Qi Xiu's sword was bent told a similar story. The audience on the cloud platform were stunned to see how the fight unraveled. The men in golden armor nodded satisfyingly, and although judging from the level of cultivation neither Ye Wei or Qi Xiu was strong enough to be recruited by the Green Army, they were aware neither of the fighters were not giving it their all.

"The battle has only just begun!" Qi Xiu's face turned ashen, "Your confidence will cost you!"

'Myst stance – Thousand Shadow Windblade!' Qi Xiu grunted and a

surge of will-force and Qi burst out of his body. Using his sword instead of fingers, he drew a sequence of few hundred runes in a second.

The light on Qi Xiu's sword intensified as breezes with a green colored glow appeared in the air as Qi Xiu's body began to float. Concentrating greatly, he quickly flicked his arm and the sword vibrated activating the rune sequence which started circulating in the air.

"Buzz! Buzz! Buzz!"

With each flick, the sword left a blurry after image in the air. These after images then attracted and merged with the runes in the air forming multiple runic swords.

"Whoosh! Whoosh!"

Qi Xiu flicked the sword nine times, and the Qi within each runic sword was not weaker than the sword in his hand.

"It's Thousand Shadow Windblade! Brother Qi Xiu must be feeling pretty angry!" The Polaris students realised Qi Xiu just used the seventh strongest stance out of the academy's collection of one hundred and seventy-two high-level Spirit stances, and for many of these students it was the first time seeing this stance used.

"But... Nine windblades? I thought it was suppose to be three?"

"Yea! Brother Qi refined it into a Myst stance. It's still so early in the fight to use something this powerful... He must be really eager to end the fight! I guess it's about time to stop them dreaming!"

The Polaris students were excited to see one of the Myst stances that made Qi Xiu famous.

"This will be the end! Three peak ten-star Warriors fell to this peak low-level Myst stance and that's only counting the fights that I heard about!" The Mo Patriarch said and the audience up on the cloud platform nodded.

"The fight has just started." City Lord Chen Yuan said while taking a sip from his wine glass and smiled. He remembered Ye Wei's face when he was testing the mental strength of this year's contestants.

“Eh?” The City Lord’s comment intrigued many as more and more of the giants seated on the cloud platform were drawn to watch the South Star – Polaris matchup.

“Another Myst stance? You have seven of those right? Let’s see how strong each of them are. If you have enough will-force and Qi to use them that is!” Ye Wei channeled his energy, cautiously assessing every since stroke of the runes Qi Xiu drew.

“I will play with you!” Ye Wei mumbled to himself and drew a small half circle on the ground with his foot; he then stomped, launching himself towards Qi Xiu. While he was in the air, his fingertips twinkled and injected an intense surge of Qi into the rune sequence next to him.

The sequence intertwined and transformed into a three headed scaled beast that resembled the statue in Bloodmist Valley, and the green fire on its body distorted the air around.

‘Selenic Descend’ Ye Wei grunted and the green globe of fire accelerated towards Qi Xiu.

Chapter 122: Triple Selenic Punch

After Ye Wei broke through to become a five-star Warrior, he went back to the Glacial Temple. There in the temple he found seven selenic beast statues inside one of the hidden chambers, and there was an encrypted formula for the stance to each of these statues. This stance was one of the techniques he learned during his visit.

The Selenic Descend was one of the Selenic Seven created by the Glacial Emperor when he was inspired from watching two selenic beasts fighting each other. Although it was only a forbidden high-level Spirit stance, its unusual Qi flow gave it power comparable to low-level Myst stances.

In the past three years, Ye Wei was able to learn five out of the seven stances during the breaks in training schedule made by Master Yi.

“Nice stance!” Qi Xiu could clearly tell Ye Wei used a stance, but the Qi flow of it was anything but ordinary, and he could not recognize most of the runes or the stance itself. The astounding energy within the Qi beast caused Qi Xiu to be very cautious as he swung his sword flinging rows of green windblades in Ye Wei’s direction from above.

Ye Wei could hear the destructive windblades raining down before he even lifted his head to see them. He narrowed his eyes and flipped his palm striking upwards. This caused the Qi beast to widened its eyes and roar.

“Roar!”

The piercing sonic waves accumulated quickly like waves in a storm, and they carried immense pressure crushing towards the green light.

“Bang! Bang! Bang!”

The swaying screen of green was shattered by the energetic sonic waves before they were even close to Ye Wei.

As the green light faded, a pair of Qi wings appeared on Ye Wei’s back. They shook and the momentum they created turned him into a blur as he advanced towards Qi Xiu with the Qi beast following closely behind

leaving two lively after images where he stood previously.

“This speed...”

The audience exclaimed in awe. They were impressed by both Qi Xiu’s and Ye Wei’s fluid display of the mastery of their stances, and it became increasingly apparent that the two were at the summit of cultivation for their age.

The paw of the beast crushed down with fearsome pressure on course to turn everything in its path to dust.

“He’s trying to counter my Myst stance with a Spirit stance? Some people just never learn to respect their opponents!” Qi Xiu mumbled to himself and shook his sword holding hand to create more windblades; he then threw the sword into the air and increased the total number of Qi swords floating in front of him to ten.

A green breeze appeared under Xi Qiu’s feet, and with it he was able to pull himself backwards as he made a number of hand seals.

“Zoom! Zoom!”

The row of Qi swords reacted to Qi Xiu’s seals. The ends then joined together to form a sword wheel which flew towards Ye Wei while spinning rapidly.

The sword wheel tore through the air and shot out arced shards of green. It resembled a burning meteorite.

“Eh?” Ye Wei frowned and flapped his wings. With a small tornado behind him he moved ten meters to the side letting the sword wheel pass to his right, but despite this many of the Qi shards managed to land on Ye Wei’s body. Ye Wei was lit up as the green runic sparks came to life from the contact between the attack and his light armor.

Ye Wei’s armor chipped as the sound intensified and lines of red began to appear on his skin followed shortly after by blood dripping to the ground.

“Ha, nice dodge,” Qi Xiu coldly chuckled at Ye Wei while he gracefully

landed on the platform. Then he made a few hand seals brightening the space in front of him with runes.

“Whoosh!”

Suddenly, the sword wheel turned around and sped towards Ye Wei’s location.

“Fine, I shall see if this stance of yours is worth dodging!” Ye Wei’s gaze sharpened as a crest with the shape of a selenic beast appeared at the back of his eyes.

‘Triple Selenic Punch!’ Ye Wei grunted and a surge of Qi came bursting out of his body. The Qi beast behind him shrunk and melted into the back of his hand giving off a pressure wave no weaker than the last stance.

“Rumble!”

Ye Wei immediately swung his fist heavily against the sword wheel as it entered his reach.

“Bang!”

The contact caused a massive explosion and the audience was forced to narrow their eyes because they were blinded by the green light that reached up to the sky. The explosion left deep fissures in the amethyst platform.

“That is terrifying!” The scars left on the solid platform were deep set as if an army had dragged thousands of swords and spears on the surface.

“What kind of stance was that?”

Feeling the sharp breeze on their faces, the jaws of the gathering students dropped yet again; they were both scared and surprised. They never expected to see this level of combat from an unknown face and Qi Xiu. Furthermore they knew they would be shredded to pieces if they stood closer to point of impact.

The fight had lasted longer than the Mo Patriarch ever anticipated, and he was starting to come out of denial. He had to admit to himself that Ye Wei was at least as strong as his favorite in this matchup.

Qi Xiu stared at the blinding green explosion with narrowed eyes. The brightness did not seem to affect his vision too much. He knew better than anyone else just how strong the Thousand Shadow Windblade stance was, and he was quite frustrated that Ye Wei had survived the stance he would confidently use to fight even condensed prime Warriors.

“Naive!” Qi Xiu stared at the green light’s core, and a cold smile appeared on his face. ‘A threat like you needs to be eradicated when it’s still possible...’ He was ready to kill Ye Wei now, and to go to great lengths in order to make it look unintentional.

“What happened?!”

“Is Wei okay?” Joe Yin, Cao Ning, Chen Mo, and the rest of South Star’s cultivators looked up nervously with narrowed eyes hoping to see if Ye Wei was okay as he was engulfed by the explosion of runic light.

Inside the globe of light, shards of broken Qi blades whizzed around at Qi Xiu’s command. They mercilessly grazed Ye Wei’s body, but he was quick to react. He was able to utilize his Selenic Armor and Driftwind Steps to avoid the lethality proposed by the shower of green Qi shards.

Although Ye Wei was bleeding, the injuries were too minor to be life-threatening.

While fighting Qi Xiu’s Qi swords, a spark of inspiration struck Ye Wei. This helped him gain a deeper understanding of the rune flow that he could apply to the third Supernova evolution. Although bleeding, he appreciated his opponent and the insights he had gained.

Ye Wei thirsted to fight more than ever before. “I can see why you thought you were strong enough to challenge a title holder!” Ye Wei grunted, and his bones shone bright golden and a surge of energy flooded his body.

He has yet to use the Supernova stance but he was able to condense his Qi to a similar intensity just by altering the meridian path. Which also caused his strength to multiply instantaneously, reaching a frightening level.

The raging energy and violent Qi quickly formed a storm around his body.

The green light then started to fade and Ye Wei was seen bursting out of the fading color towards Qi Xiu. His lightning speed was not achievable even for ordinary condensed prime Warriors unless they were under the effect of speed enhancing stances.

A intense air current followed behind him and the young cultivators watching nearby felt the pressure on their eardrums while the weaker ones had trouble keeping steady footing.

“How is he still alive and got even stronger!?”

The smile on Qi Xiu’s face evaporated, and his pupils dilated. He was struggling to believe what he was sensing because he expected the complete opposite to happen. Within a blink of an eye, he made the decision to retreat. He kicked the ground hard and slid back twenty meters.

“Bang!”

Ye Wei’s fist was quicker than Qi Xiu’s escape attempt, and a pothole appeared in the middle of the martial platform where purple rubble splashed up. A huge web of fissure grew and a screen of dust thickened as a thundering rumble shook everyone around platform ten.

Qi Xiu wiped off the blood on the corner of his mouth with the back of his hand. If he had been a moment slower with his reading of the situation or his sidestep, he would now be a part of the broken floor.

‘Was that even a stance...’ Drops of cold sweat fell from Qi Xiu’s pale face onto the platform.

“You are one of the first to push me this far!” Qi Xiu ground his teeth. “I will not let this go! You are done for!” A surge of Qi powered through his body as he grunted. He flicked his black sleeve and a violent breeze caused all the surrounding dust to vanish.

“Buzz!”

Qi Xiu's veins were bulging as he began to draw runes in the air.

"Too slow." Ye Wei sped up again before Qi Xiu could finish his runes. He had become a flash of light and disappeared.

Qi Xiu panicked and felt a chill behind his back. When he turned around, he saw a fist with the selenic beast patterned crest on its back. It was flying towards his spine and the moisture around it was condensing quickly.

Chapter 123: Star Shifter Formula

‘Triple Selenic Punch!’

In front of everyone’s widened eyes and frightened glares, Ye Wei’s fist solidly landed on Qi Xiu’s back causing a chilling noise to be heard.

“Crack!”

The dense energy of Ye Wei’s fist sent Qi Xiu flying like a spinning kite with its string cut, and after a few rotations in the air, the motionless body wrapped in a black robe slammed onto the martial platform creating a small dust storm.

Apart from his immense forward momentum, Ye Wei’s punch also contained a spinning energy due to the unique path his Qi flowed.

“Has brother Qi... lost?!” The Polaris cultivators rubbed their eyes in disbelief. They were just staring at a bump on the platform covered in dust finding it hard to convince themselves a nameless cultivator from a mediocre school could beat their ace. Someone who just happened to be one stance away from beating a God’s Seven in a fight a few days ago.

‘Was there a stance behind that punch? Otherwise I would assume we are looking at a condensed prime Warrior who is skilled at hiding his cultivation as well as his age, or maybe this is something else...’ The audience seated the clouds were a little wary as they had heard rumors about demon infiltrations just a few months prior to the tournament.

“He won! Ye Wei won!” Cao Ning, Chen Mo, and the rest cheered as soon as they got over their shock.

Ye Wei slowly pulled back his fist, and the mark on the back of his hand faded. It was at this time that he noticed some slight movement behind the smokescreen in front of him.

A wave of surprise swept over the faces on the cloud platform.

“This kid from South Star is not bad at all!” The City Lord smiled as he looked at Ye Wei’s graceful posture. He then looked at Qi Xiu and said, “It’s lucky for Qi Xiu; if Polaris had not of taught their best students the

Star Shifter formula he would have lost.”

“Indeed!” The men in golden armor nodded. They glanced at Qi Xiu with a penetrating glare.

“That was a powerful punch but the moment it connected to Qi Xiu most of the energy was deflected and slid off his body.”

“He is basically as strong as a condensed prime Warrior so he could take the punch anyway.” The Mo Patriarch looked at the dusty platform and said, “Everyone knows he lost to Xuan Yu, by only one stance. What people don’t know is that Xuan Yu was already a condensed prime Warrior when they fought.”

“Qi Xiu has mastered the Star Shifter formula pretty well. I actually think this formula is the reason Polaris was ranked so high last year, and even their lineup was not as strong this year’s.”

“That other kid is impressive but it will take more than impressive to beat Qi Xiu.”

None of the young cultivators could see what Qi Xiu did but the audience on the clouds could see clearly. What they did not know though was how Ye Wei threw such a powerful punch.

On the amethyst platform, Qi suddenly floated in a strange manner. Qi Xiu did a backflip and got back on his feet. He then hatefully stared at Ye Wei. Luckily, he was able to activate his Star Shifter formula the moment he was hit, however Ye Wei’s speed resulted in two of his ribs fracturing.

Bone fractures were not a serious concern to cultivators of Qi Xiu’s caliber as he just casually snapped his bone back to place and mend it by his nourishing Qi.

“Brother Qi!”

“He is okay!”

The Polaris cultivators excitedly screamed.

“What just happened? Ye Wei’s punched should have crushed him! How can Qi Xiu still stand up? I heard the sound of bones cracking!” The

smiles of the South Star students disappeared as their eyes widened. They were staring at the dusty black robe with disbelief.

“Apart from Xuan Yu, you are the strongest cultivator I have fought but that does not mean you can beat me! You are not even close!” Qi Xiu exhaled gently and said slowly.

“What a wonderful formula Polaris Academy’s Star Shifter is!” Ye Wei exclaimed. He did expect Qi Xiu to stand back up, and he could feel the strength of his fist being diverted to different directions.

It was not Qi Xiu’s intention for Ye Wei to learn more about his Qi flow, but inspired by Qi Xiu’s narrow deflection Ye Wei was able to find ways to strengthen his family’s Falling Star Form.

“Sorry, I’ve underestimated you, but I guess it’s fair because you did too. Do you think we should stop the dancing and actually fight?” Ye Wei was not frightened in the least, on the contrary he was even more excited and competitive. He was interested in discovering the way Qi Xiu’s Star Shifter technique worked.

The Qi around Ye Wei’s body shook violently.

“What did he just say?” The gathering audience could not believe what they had just heard. They were shocked to learn they had yet to show their full strength when the martial platform was already broken by these two monsters.

Qi Xiu frowned as could not believe Ye Wei could tell what trick he used to reduce the impact of the punch.

“Don’t hold back anymore; I don’t want to hurt you.” Ye Wei looked at Qi Xiu and loosened his joints. “Let me see how well you can use the Star Shifter!”

Ye Wei’s expression became serious as his robes began to flutter. He released the seal in his dantian, and his presence exploded like a dragon who had just broke free from chains. He was now multiple times stronger than a normal peak ten-star Warrior.

Although cultivation-wise Ye Wei was just a peak ten-star Warrior,

when it came to his Qi and the will-force in his Sentient his foundation was such that nobody on the same level could be remotely compared to him.

“How can he be this strong?!” The young South Star, Polaris, and Galaxy cultivators were actually terrified and a series of scream sounded around platform ten.

“Interesting, looks like we should not blink starting from now. This kid is surely a top class fighter at his level,” The City Lord was impressed by how Ye Wei could route his Qi and will-force, and how that made Ye Wei four times stronger than most talented peak ten-star Warriors he had encountered.

‘He should be able to breakthrough soon, if he hasn’t already. On the other hand if Qi Xiu uses the Star Shifter formula to its full potential even if Ye Wei breaks through right now it wouldn’t mean much...’

“Qi Xiu is unbelievable with Star Shifter formula, but that South Star kid’s foundation is on its own level!” The men in golden armor were chatting to one another and all nodded satisfyingly. “This is more like it; now they could actually join our reserve infantry or at least bootcamp!”

“Your lordship, would you happen to know the South Star kid’s name?” The leader of the military group asked.

“Is the Green Army interested in him too? The City Lord frowned. He was clearly bothered that Ye Wei had the Green Army’s attention.

In fact most of the guests on the cloud platform were interested in Ye Wei. A young cultivator with such foundation would surely become great, but seeing as the City Lord and the Green Army were taking notice of him, they could only shake their heads reluctantly as they knew they wouldn’t have a chance to recruit him.

“We’ll see. Undoubtedly that South Star boy is something special but I still think he does not compare to them...” The Green Army cultivators exchanged a look and started whispering.

Qi Xiu and Ye Wei’s display attracted a lot of attention because they

were still fighting long after the other fights had finished. All the other schools sent their students to platform ten hoping they would be able to get some information about both South Star and Polaris.

Apart from people's eyes, warm rays of the sun were also on Ye Wei and Qi Xiu as noon approached. The sunlight was refracted by the runes in the air forming a complex and dazzling web of light.

Ye Wei stomped the ground and launched himself out like an arrow towards Qi Xiu. His speed was even quicker than before and most of the audience could no longer follow his moves. All they could see were blurred the after images he left behind.

“Bang! Bang! Bang!”

The students could not see how Ye Wei attacked but they could clearly hear continuous, daunting explosion ring out.

Many of them rubbed their eyes and tried refocusing them but Ye Wei's speed made it impossible, and all they could see was a blurred figure whizzing around Qi Xiu.

After a series of aggressive attacks, Qi Xiu's face changed. There was undisguised shock in his eyes as he didn't think Ye Wei would be this fast and this strong.

Even though Qi Xiu was protected by the Shifting Star formula, Ye Wei's increasing speed and power began to have a disrupting effect on the delicate and mysterious Qi flow in his body.

Although Qi Xiu was able to deflect the impact from punch after punch, but his body's strength was still lackluster compared to Ye Wei's. He had soon reached the limit of what his body could take.

“I guess I will have to...” Qi Xiu ground his teeth as he started to consider using the Myst stance he had never used in the eyes of the public.

When he challenged the third strongest of the God's Seven, he held this stance back even though he knew it was his only chance to win. He was not willing to use his secret weapon so close to the tournament.

The other reason he held it was that his secret weapon was a forbidden low-level Myst stance, and he knew that his Qi and will-force would be immediately drained when he use this stance. Also the recoil would heavily injure him.

But at this moment, Qi Xiu was too involved to care. Ye Wei fist landed on him again and again, and he could no longer keep the Star Shifter formula up. “You forced me!”

Chapter 124: Black Flare

The messy Qi flow within Qi Xiu calmed down and he quickly made a few hand seals in front of his chest and a few runes appeared.

“Is this Qi Xiu’s secret weapon?” The students from different schools could feel his Qi increasing as each rune appeared.

Up on the cloud platforms, the stance was starting to make the audience wary.

“Your Lordship, make sure none of them get hurt! Especially that kid from South Star!”

“Of course! The judges are there for a reason!” The City Lord answered. “Ha this Qi Xiu is extraordinary. Polaris Academy is lucky to find a student that is suitable to learn all their best stances!”

“It’s that stance! I don’t even remember the last time I saw this stance from a Polaris student!”

“We should thank this nameless kid for the entertainment! It’s quite an achievement pushing Qi Xiu this far! He will become famous just from this.”

“Oh well, looks like this is the end. I don’t see how Qi Xiu’s stance could possibly be stopped by this kid.”

Previously, Ye Wei, while being the aggressor, learned most of the Star Shifter formula’s secrets from feeling the energy flow in Qi Xiu’s body with his fist. Just from that, Ye Wei was greatly rewarded from this fight.

Feeling the fearsome Qi disturbance in the air, Ye Wei was becoming increasingly cautious; he was positive that the stance he was about to see would be on a different level than Qi Xiu’s previous stances.

Ye Wei was like a lone leaf on a wavy ocean of primal energy, but he was not scared. His eyes shone with a fighting spirit as oppose to the similar aged audience’s fear.

“This is what I’ve been looking forward to! Fight with your heart! Let me

earn the victory and move on to the God's Seven then to Qing state's finals, and eventually I will challenge the cultivators at the summit in the capital!" Ye Wei's body was fueled with immense energy.

"I am surprised you've pushed me this far boy. It's my honor to beat you with this stance! I will dominate!" Qi Xiu finished making the last hand seal as the last runes of the sequence were drawn; drops of sweat slid down his pale face and he was now panting as he spoke slowly.

As Qi Xiu's voice was heard, the runes in the air vibrated violently forming rippling black waves pressure waves around him.

"Zoom! Zoom!"

The background primal energy around the platform began to resonate with the rune sequence and quickly condensed into growing dark globes above Qi Xiu's head.

All whole audience gasped in shock seeing that Qi Xiu was able to use the wild unpurified primal energy by guiding it with his own Qi. They were all impressed and scared by the scale of the stance Qi Xiu was using.

'Seven Dark Flare!'

Vice-principal Xu He stared at the growing energy globes warily. He watched it as it grew and began to burn like the sun. 'His master allows him to use a forbidden low-level Myst stance?!'

Under the platform, Jian Chen of Zhoutian Sword school, Shi Yuntian of Tri-Solar School, and a few Galaxy Academy students were the only ones who could look past how scary the stance was and appreciate how the stance worked.

"Ha!" The dark skinned Seven Star school cultivator, who had a brief exchange of look with Ye Wei, grunted. He stared at Qi Xiu with an evil smile and did not seemed impressed by the stance.

Meanwhile the speculation did not stop from above on the cloud platform.

"This has been the highlight of my day!"

“Yea, me too! Interesting development from a seemingly one-sided matchup.”

“Haha! If the kid from South Star were a condensed prime Warrior this fight would have been even more interesting!”

The pressure of Seven Dark Flare thickened in the air.

“A forbidden stance?” Ye Wei rose his head and carefully observed the black sun above Qi Xiu as a golden flash appeared through his eyes.

Ye Wei watched as the globe’s energy intensified. He could feel the heavy pressure ramping up pressing towards him like a great mountain. He could also feel the weak spots of the stance. Ye Wei stretched out his fingers which had shining runes in-between them while looking forward to fighting the flaring black sun.

“You should be proud of yourself for losing to this stance you know?” Qi Xiu looked at Ye Wei with aggression completely ignore the fact that he would have to rest for at least half a month after using this stance. It would be unsettling not to make Ye Wei pay for the humiliation he caused.

“Zoom!”

When the stance’s energy reached its peak, Qi Xiu slowly extended his palm and guided the heavy energy globe at Ye Wei. He ground his teeth as drops of sweat ran down his cheeks, and his shaky hands indicated just how hard it was to control the stance.

‘Get scotched by the flames!’ Qi Xiu’s face became hideous as the veins on his neck and head bulged when he quickly threw his hand down. The black suns glowed brighter than before and the blinding rays made the sun above look dim.

“Bang!”

The wild force within the black runic sun was finally unleashed, and it felt as if the sky itself was falling onto Ye Wei. The cracks on the platform kept on growing as the stance descended.

The fearsome momentum began to affect the audience nearby, and the City Lord casually waved his hand. The runes he drew flew down from the cloud platform and expanded to become an invisible shield which contained the impact of Qi Xiu's stance within the platform.

All the cultivators started running away from the platform when they felt Qi Xiu's stance expanding and if the City Lord did not interfere there was a chance that a lot of the audience would just be crushed and die from the stance.

"God... And Qi Xiu has still not cast the stance onto Ye Wei." Ning Yang was admiring Qi Xiu as he looked at Ye Wei with a pernicious gaze imagining Ye Wei crumbling to the Seven Dark Flare stance.

"Wei, just let this go!"

"It's too dangerous! Just surrender Wei!"

Cao Ning, Joe Yin, and the other South Star cultivators couldn't help but worry for Ye Wei's life.

A powerful gush of wind was fluttering Ye Wei's robe as he flicked all five of his fingers and a sequence of mysterious runes appeared on his fingertips. They then quickly turned into cyan-hued sparks of fire.

"These are..."

The whole audience, most of the schools' team leaders and students watching the fight, was sure Ye Wei would lose; however, up on the cloud platform the Runemasters, City Lord, and the Green Army cultivators widened their eyes staring at the shapes in front of Ye Wei.

"Those are Specialized Runes!" There was fire in their eyes.

They knew Ye Wei was not giving his all but they never could have guessed that Ye Wei hid such frightening potential. These special runes were very difficult to learn and had power that matched their difficulty.

One, two, three...

More and more strange, brilliant patterns shone all around Ye Wei's body.

There were twelve in total when they started flowing around his body. They covered his body in a golden light, but they were also at work inside his body. Inside there were even more of these specialized runes fluidly circulated over his bones.

‘Supernova stance!’

The energy on Ye Wei grew three times stronger and now the pressure he gave off was no weaker than a one-star condensed prime Warrior. Ye Wei put this power behind his fist as he leaped towards the black sun.

“Eh?” Qi Xiu could feel Ye Wei’s power had suddenly increased multiple times, ‘I don’t care if you are still hiding anything there is no way you can live through this!’

“First solar flare!” All seven energy globes brightened and then started to suck light from the surrounding space creating a vacuum behind the energy waves.

“What kind of stance is this?”

“Bloody hell. Is this really a fight between two Warriors? This looks more like a clash of condensed prime Warriors to me...”

Most of the student cultivators were getting discouraged by the mightiness of the two students in front of them.

The Goldenwood school sent their students to the tournament like they always did, and a curious teenager in a red robe with gold stitches walked closer to confirm a theory that was growing in his head. “Is it him?” He was not talking about Qi Xiu, a known competitor of his, he was talking the kid Qi Xiu was fighting.

‘Three years ago... This kid was next to that terrifying girl with purple hair; I will never forget what happened in Bloodmist Valley!’ Luo Wu Xue could not believe that helpless looking kid was now fighting his rival to a length he himself never could.

The suns approached Ye Wei and he could feel the fearsome energy from how much pressure was on his body; it was a horrifying amount of energy he could not just ignore.

Chapter 125: Searing Selenic Palm

‘Searing Selenic Palm.’ Ye Wei used the momentum of his falling body to take a step forward, and the second his toes touched the ground the whole platform shook. He relaxed his shoulders and after a brief moment of silence he stretched his finger and put them into the sparks of green runic fire.

“Boom!”

Immediately after he placed his fingers into the fire, an immense heat wave burst out. Riding the wave, the cyan sparks sped towards the seven dark globes of energy in the sky.

“Whoosh!”

The sparks enlarged against the air current they created and merged to become a spirit selenic beast which violently collided into Qi Xiu’s stance.

“Bang!”

Although contained in the City Lord’s rune shield, the whole mountain trembled from the impact. The platforms closest to Ye Wei and Qi Xiu’s fight began to shake violently and they were on the verge of collapsing.

The cyan sparks of fire crashed into the black energy globes and erupted. A burst of blinding light shone in the sky and forced many to close their eyes because it was nearly as bright as the midday sun.

‘I never thought it would be this powerful... Pu Yuan always told me how much stronger stances composed of specialized runes were compared to ordinary stances, but I never had a chance to actually test it before now! My stance is only a high-level Spirit stance but there are twelve specialized runes intermixed with the thirty-six normal ones; this should be enough to beat his Myst stance.’

Ye Wei remained calm and calculating. He was as cautious as it was his first time using what he had learned in a real combat, and therefore he wasn’t sure how effective it would be.

Even considering stances' power vary depending on the user's strength many would say Ye Wei was mad to use a Spirit stance against the Seven Black Flare stance. Although Ye Wei had the strength of a condensed prime Warrior under the Supernova stance's effect, it would take a returned prime Warrior to confidently deal with a Warrior's Myst stance with just a Spirit stance.

It was to everyone's surprise that the two stances were now caught in a deadlock.

Qi Xiu became furious. His face began to twist in anger as he struggled to accept the first flare of his stance could not crush a mere Spirit stance.

"Just wait! And don't get cocky just because you dealt with one, there are more to come!" Qi Xiu screamed as he fired off the second, third, and the fourth flares. They were only becoming stronger after each burst from the flaring orbs.

"Boom! Boom!"

The energy of Qi Xiu's and Ye Wei's stances kept engulfing, crashing, grinding, and reducing each other.

With the fourth explosion Qi Xiu was starting to gain an advantage as the black energy globes grew even larger and eventually suppressed Ye Wei's runic fire entirely.

"Is Qi Xiu going to win?"

"He can not hold himself against Qi Xiu's stance anymore!"

The darkness of Qi Xiu's stance was consuming the green light like a rising tide. It then quickly spread and began to swallow Ye Wei.

"He is still young, maybe in a few years he will be able to beat Qi Xiu and even stronger opponents! I look forward to seeing that!"

'I can't hold this much longer!' Ye Wei felt his energy being drained quickly, 'but I can't show the Supernova stance's second evolution just yet...'

It was impossible for anyone to tell that Ye Wei had the luxury to

choose how he should hide his true power in this seemingly dire situation, nor did they have a way to find out.

A spark of inspiration hit Ye Wei as he started channeling his Qi using the Falling Star formula. He also incorporated the Shifting Star formula in the way he had with his Qi when it flowed through his body earlier, after which he started smiling.

Some of the audience thought Ye Wei was happy to face his death, and even the powerful cultivators on the cloud platform could not figure out the reason why Ye Wei was smiling. The strongest ones among them were the only people who were surprised when they realized he was still not showing his all.

“Do you know the saying about shoes and feet?” Ye Wei smiled and drew a long rune sequence for the Selenic Armor stance.

“Huh? But he used the exact same defensive stance before and it was shattered by Qi Xiu!” The audience was confused by Ye Wei’s decision and worried for his life as they did not know that he had just learned Polaris’ Star Shifter formula and therefore it was a different book with the same cover.

The fourth strike landed on Ye Wei’s body, and he just took a few steps back before he regained his balance but the armor was completely intact and there were no signs of injuries on him at all.

“What?”

“He actually blocked it?!”

The gathering crowd was shocked and confused. They did not see how it was possible for Ye Wei to defend himself against Qi Xiu’s explosive power.

“Ha, what a genius!” The City Lord laughed and clapped as he looked at Ye Wei.

He then explained to the confused faces, “The kid basically learned how Star Shifter works. It must have been when Qi Xiu used it to redirect the force of his punches. He then infused the principles of Star Shifter into

his own defensive stance. You all know how the Seven Dark Flare stance works, and just now the kid used Star Shifter to divert the focused energy of the flare strikes so it would just slide off the surface of his runic armor. Therefore he reduced the dangerous stance into an unfocused wave of energy. That was truly impressive.”

“Is that even possible?” Knowing better than to doubt the City Lord, everyone was shocked to hear his explanation as they had never heard of cultivators who could learn their opponent’s technique during a fight and then immediately apply it, infusing it into his own stances. They could not imagine what Ye Wei’s future held.

Qi Xiu screamed, and his face twisted in shock. He became increasingly frustrated because he did not understand how Ye Wei had managed to handle his stance with ease.

‘Fifth, sixth, and seventh!’

The flare bursts became stronger and stronger as Qi Xiu was overwhelmed with rage while Ye Wei was smiling with joy. ‘Star Shifter formula is very interesting to say the least. I think I will even be able to infuse the Qi flow to Driftwind Steps to create a completely new speed enhancing technique. What a shame it is for Qi Xiu to know the formula but not how to fully use it in combat.’

“I just showed you that your stance means nothing to me. Are you stubborn or just stupid?” Ye Wei mumbled then grunted, ‘Searing Selenic Palm!’

The green spark on Ye Wei’s hand burned bright as he leaped towards the weakest spot of Qi Xiu’s black sun. He also channeled his modified Selenic Armor stance to defend himself. The black energy burst slid off his body as he expected.

“Boom!”

Ye Wei whizzed in the air above the platform as the black and green energy waves turned into two raging tornados upon contact.

“Crack! Crack!”

It was now when the City Lord realized that the runic shield he had casually made moments ago was not enough to contain this fight, and that he has underestimated the contestants on platform ten. Countless cracks and fissures formed on the shield's surface and they quickly grew deeper and longer. With a sudden rumble, the two Qi tornados broke out of the containment.

Around the platform, the gathering students were all knocked into the air, and farther away young cultivators with less than a seven-star Warrior's cultivation all becoming pale and started spitting up blood as the impact stuck.

In the middle of the cloud platform, the City Lord was stunned. He immediately stood up and his hands rained down thousands of runes creating a thicker, tougher shield around platform ten.

"This is crazy... Are we watching two condensed prime Warriors fight each other?" Everyone was still recovering and wondering if the fight was over.

Although everyone outside the newly made shield was rather safe, it did not look good on the inside. The platform was being ravaged by the trapped energy, and it was starting to wobble as cracks and fissures gradually ate into the platform's core.

The dust inside the shield turned green and brightened as the dark flares were put out by the sheer force of Ye Wei's green fire. His fist then mercilessly struck onto Qi Xiu's chest.

Although contained, the sound of Qi Xiu's groan was louder than the shield could nullify. He was launched high up in the air by Ye Wei's fists as his body swayed like a dead leaf in the autumn breeze. He bled out of his mouth and his clothes turned into scraps. He was covered in gashes and bruises, and when he fell onto the ravaged platform, he passed out.

Chapter 126: Fame

“Qi Xiu!” The vice-principal of Polaris widened his bloodshot eyes, and his heart was shattered by what he saw. He then quickly flew into the platform next to Qi Xiu checking his injuries.

Ye Wei was panting, and feeling a bit tired from the violent exchange; however, he did manage to reserve some of his Qi and will-force. Although his clothes were charred and his body was scorched by the dark energy flares, he did come out of the fight as the victor without having to give it his all.

A complex smile appeared on Ye Wei’s face.

“Not bad at all!” Xu He said in an admiring tone as casually walked onto the platform. He patted Ye Wei’s shoulder feeling shocked as he did not anticipate to see such a masterful display; this had been way out of his expectations.

Ye Wei defeating Qi Xiu meant more than just a victory. It implied that South Star just got into a much better position. They had now gained the momentum to challenge the top ranks.

“Xu He, Qi Xiu is our principal’s grandson, if he does not fully recover from these injuries then I am sure the principal will make South Star pay!” Polaris’ vice-principal growled at Xu He like an angry lion after feeding Qi Xiu a healing pills.

South Star Academy and Polaris Academy had never been on good terms and the result of this fight just brought them to a new low.

“Vice-principal Zhu Ge, it’s unavoidable for fighters to get injured on the martial platforms, but isn’t that why we always teach the youngsters the importance of defending themselves?” Xu He chuckled, mocking Zhu Ge’s arrogance. “A few days ago your boys came to stir up quite a dispute at our school gate, and yesterday after our students had just settled, Qi Xiu decided to bring his friends to pay us a visit. I got over it as nobody was harmed badly, and I really did not want to bring this to the authorities attention so that the kids can have a chance to learn

something in a fair match! Now you are calling us out for injuring Qi Xiu when that brat got what he asked for by not defending himself? Ye Wei did not break any rules before and during the fight!” Xu He’s face went bright red as he was unwilling to give Zhu Ge an inch.

“You... you.. Just wait!” Zhu Ge was shivering in anger and embarrassment. He flicked his sleeve then ordered the students to carry Qi Xiu back to their palace.

The result of the South Star versus Polaris matchup was a surprising upset for the audience. Every school started talking about and analyzing what they had just saw, and they couldn’t help but speculate how well this dark horse would perform later on in the tournament.

“I never thought South Star would be hiding talents under our noses like this! Where was he last year?”

“Polaris would never have been what it is today if it wasn’t for the Seven Dark Flare stance. It’s both impressive and kind of a shame that the stance was defeated by some nameless kid; the world surely is changing!”

“I think we have ourselves a possible contestant for the God’s Seven title!”

A few days ago when Qi Xiu fought Xuan Yu, he only lost by a small margin and everyone thought that he would redeem himself in the tournament and get himself a spot in the seven. Never did they expect Qi Xiu to lose in such a manner, crushed before he even had a chance to fight one of the seven. The crowd’s attention naturally fell onto the person who stopped Qi Xiu.

“Does anyone know his name?”

“He is called Ye Wei!”

“Ye Wei? I’ve never heard that name anywhere. I guess he really is new. I heard that we should expect to see quite a few new faces who can actually fight.”

A lot of young cultivators gathered around the platform including students from Seven Star School.

“Tu Fu Sheng, that Ye Wei character looks very promising. He might be one of your main competitors in the tournament!” A foxy young lady said to the dark skinned boy next to her with a slightly seductive smile. Her pink silk dress highlighted the curves on her slender body which caught the attention of quite a few boys around her.

Although the boys were from the same school as she was, they were looking at her with fear, that was everyone except Tu Fu Sheng; the one who had brief eye contact with Ye Wei.

“Well, let’s not come on conclusions before I actually fight him! He is my prey by the way, don’t you dare take this one away from me!” Tu Fu Sheng replied but he was not looking at the girl, he had his dark brown eyes set on Ye Wei. As he watch this previously unknown cultivator a wicked green glow shone deep within his pupils as he smiled.

Not a lot of young cultivators interested him, but Ye Wei happened to be one of the few.

“Oh yeah?” The girl replied noncommittally and as her eyes narrowed as her charming smile grew.

On the other side of the platform Jian Shi Yu was having a chat with Jian Chen.

“Those were some impressive forbidden Myst stances by Qi Xiu, and that South Star youngster was able to deal with them all. On top of that he only shown two stances of his own while doing so. What do you think Chen? Do you think you can beat that South Star youngster?” The sage-like old man asked in a caring tone.

“If I keep my seals intact while fighting him I will definitely lose, but if I break my seals open, he doesn’t stand a chance.” Jian Chen paused and said as his brows rose.

“Haha, it’s good that you are confident, but don’t underestimate him. He has not shown us everything. Fight safe even if you decide to break the seals!” Jian Shi Yu patted his young apprentice’s head and said earnestly.

A flash of determination appeared in Jian Chen’s eyes as he thought

about his master's words. 'It would be fun to fight him if that was not his all! Otherwise I won't be able to practise those stances before I fight anyone stronger!'

The team from Tri-Solar School assembled and also caught the end of the fight. "That was the kid we saw in the mountains right? The kid without any Qi presence! I guess they do have a chance to fight for one of the top three spots with someone like that in their team... Hun Tian, do you think you will come out ahead if you are to fight that kid?" The red-haired vice-principal looked at Ye Wei striding down the martial platform and asked his favourite student.

"Seventy percent sure I will. Qi Xiu is just trash compared to me!" Shi Hun Tian's gaze darted at the winner of the fight and sneered.

For Shi Hun Tian, cultivation was life. After becoming one of the God's Seven, he gained a lot of confidence and developed his fighting style from his experience he knew that Xuan Yu did not fight seriously or else Qi Xiu wouldn't last a minute against any of the seven.

"I will let that South Star kid know he is too young and too weak!" Shi Hun Tian grunted.

His vice-principal nodded. He had no choice but to trust his student as he had no idea what tricks were hidden up the newest God's Seven's sleeve.

As the host, Galaxy Academy had the advantage of numbers. All their non-competing students were told to gather as much information as they could before the tournament even started.

"Ye Wei could probably get himself into the seven."

"In my honest opinion, not at all. All seven of them had one or more powerful special stance in their arsenal. Ye Wei's stance is not powerful enough to pull him through, not to mention he will need more stances to fight the seven."

"It really depends on how you look at it. I think it was obvious he fought Qi Xiu offhandedly."

The Galaxy School students stopped their chatter and bowed when they saw three teenagers approaching.

“Greetings!” It was hard for any of them to stay calm as all three of the approaching teenagers were the top cultivators of Galaxy School one of which was even a God’s Seven.

“Interesting!” The sleek teenager looked at Ye Wei and smiled playfully. “Qi Xiu is a fool, just because he learned a few nice stances doesn’t mean he can fight so carelessly... Did he really think he was one stance away from beating Xuan Yu? It was so obvious Xuan Yu was toying him!”

“He can use forbidden Myst stances so what? Everyone of the seven can do much better, furthermore with Qi and will-force as weak as his, Myst stance or not, it will not be effective,” The tall, sleek teenager continued. It was obvious he despised Qi Xiu. “On the other hand, the cultivator from South Star is definitely something special. It will take either me, Xuan Yu, or Feng Yi to beat him,” This sleek teenager was not overconfident despite the fact that he was the second strongest of the God’s Seven.

The other students listening in were shocked by the high praise Ye Wei was given.

After this fight, South Star suddenly became the center of attention and Ye Wei had become the young cultivator of the hour.

The audience on the platform were also impressed by Ye Wei, not by his victory, but how quickly he learned and his ability to copy his opponent’s techniques under pressure.

“Your lordship, everyone from the Green Army to the Mo family would like to recruit this kid, would you care to let me have this one?” The Mo Patriarch shamelessly requested as he realized he had been wrong this whole time, it was apparent after the fight that Ye Wei had better potential to achieve greatness.

“Mo Patriarch, your greed is disgusting. We didn’t say a word when you said you wanted to recruit Qi Xiu because we respected you but can you not push us?” One of the other patriarchs smiled and expressed his

honest opinion.

“This kid has great potential, but we never really know who would be the best candidate until the later stages,” One of the men in golden armor said.

It was the army’s tradition not to decide who they’d recruit until they saw the later fights. That was how they kept their new blood’s quality high throughout the years.

The first day of fights ended with a lot of guests being disappointed as the army has shown interest in Ye Wei. They knew they wouldn’t have a chance to recruit such a talented individual.

The South Star team finished on a high gaining one point and putting themselves on the top half together with seventeen other schools.

Chapter 127: Demon

Soon after the match between South Star and Polaris finished the gathering crowd dispersed and returned to their accommodations to rest. Everyone needed to prepare for the second day's matchup of this month-long tournament.

"Hahaha! Wei, you truly are an impressive cultivator! You didn't give Qi Xiu any breathing room towards the end of the fight! You have avenged Mu Feng and our school. I don't think anyone from Polaris Academy will have the guts to mess with us from now on!" Liu Jian enthusiastically said hugging Ye Wei like his own brother.

The excitement of victory did not disappear for the South Star youngsters; they were still talking about details of the fights and their saliva was flying all over the place as they discussed how Ye Wei defeated Qi Xiu.

Cao Ning in particular was feeling ecstatic. He was proud to have performed better than anyone expected and glad for his best friend who had grown to become unimaginably strong.

"Qi Xiu used a forbidden low-level Myst stance! I could feel its recoil all the way from the back! I don't think he will recover without half a month's rest. Judging by how things are going, Polaris would need to wait until next year if they want to get into top ten!" Liu Jian was ecstatic because the bully finally became the bullied.

"Alright enough, stop bothering Ye Wei. Everyone go get some rest! Tomorrow is as important as today if not more!" Xu He gave each of the students two pills, one for healing and the other for restoring Qi and will-force.

"Yes sir!"

Everyone took their pills and hugged Ye Wei before they went back to their own rooms. All of them had used up a large amount energy and some of them were quite injured despite what their newfound confidence let them believe.

Ye Wei was debriefed by Xu He before he went back to his own room. Soon everyone was cultivating and preparing for tomorrow as they knew time was of the essence. There was an unspoken sense of urgency as the contestants' condition would ultimately dictate their final ranking.

The mountain eventually calmed down as night fell on this day of bloodshed. Everyone who fought was now focused on recuperating before they would once again have to be at their best again tomorrow.

The clear moon hung high in the dark sky shining down its white light onto Ye Wei's body. He had his eyes closed while cultivating and visualizing the Shifting Star form he learned from fighting Qi Xiu.

"It's still not enough... Although fighting Qi Xiu taught me a lot, it's not enough to help me to become a condensed prime Warrior. But who knows, if I get the chance to fight more cultivators of his caliber or stronger I might just find how I need to strengthen my body in order to breakthrough." Ye Wei opened his eyes as a spark of inspiration hit him, and he mumbled to himself as a smile shone on his face.

After learning the principals of the Star Shifter formula, Ye Wei worked on refining Driftwind Steps for the rest of the evening. He knew how he wanted the stance to develop but had not yet tasted any success; however, he could feel the pieces slowly coming together.

When the moon was high in the sky, Cao Ning decided to join Ye Wei in training. They ended up working on the Onyx Tortoise stance.

Helping Cao Ning refine his stance turned out to be great revision of basic rune flow for Ye Wei, and they were both enthusiastic to take advantage of the situation.

"Yea, that's it, just take it slow. Don't hurry!"

In the dead of night, Ye Wei guided Cao Ning under the faint moonlight. They were productive and refreshed by the breeze. Cao knew he was not the most talented cultivator, but what he lacked in talent he made up for with hard work.

All of a sudden, the cold breeze brought an intoxicating scent to the

pair's faces. Ye Wei could not help but closing his eyes at the pleasant smell but then he faintly felt a strange presence.

“Who is it?”

Ye Wei widened his eyes, and his posture changed from relaxed to alert as he stared at the empty space in front of him.

Cao Ning was shocked as he did not expect Ye Wei to shout; he turned his eyes from the runes in front of him to where Ye Wei was looking.

“Wei? What’s wrong?” Cao Ning could see nothing but the patchy moonlight on the floor. He looked over confused.

Ye Wei kept staring at the air completely ignoring Cao Ning.

“Kikiki, outstanding Soul Sensitivity! I must admit you scared me!” Just when Cao Ning was about to ask again, a cold, hoarse voice sounded out.

A thick black mist suddenly appeared from where the voice came from, and a completely black silhouette of a robed person appeared within the mist.

“Who are you!?” Cao Ning felt a chill in his scalp, and his clothes were immediately soaked in cold sweat before he took a few clumsy steps back.

“Farther back!” Ye Wei placed his hand on Cao Ning’s shoulder and sent him flying backwards with a gentle push while he tried to figure out what exactly he was looking at. He was increasingly convinced that whatever he was looking at was not human due to its peculiar presence. ‘If he is from the Blackmist clan, this could go really bad...’

“How courageous of you sneaking around Galaxy Academy’s grounds. You do know some of the best human cultivators of this region are here with us right?” Ye Wei was cautious but not scared. He was wondering how a demon managed to infiltrate the tournament under the strict security.

“Don’t worry about me, worry about yourself. These powerful cultivators you speak of did not notice how I got in, and they will not know that I killed you!” A pair of sharp white teeth appeared in the black

mist together with the sound of chuckling.

The demon then loosened its grip and dropped a black jade pendant onto the floor. The pendant shattered and each of the broken shards had scale-like patterns on them.

“Whoosh!”

The jade scales after hitting the ground bounced back up, flew into the night sky and then fell to the ground with a curve leaving a semi-spherical body of black mist isolating a spot in the courtyard from the rest of the palace.

“Black Scale Array!” Ye Wei looked up worryingly to see a distorted moon through the mist. His pupils dilated as he breathed in the thickening air inside the concealed space.

“I am curious, is it really worth you wasting this array just a trap a mere Warrior like me?” Ye Wei frowned and stared at the black silhouette.

“Not really!” The demon shook its head and made a strange cracking noise. “You are just unlucky. My idea was to find myself a talented human during the tournament, and suffice it to say, you really stood out.”

Listening to the demon, Ye Wei figured this could be a part of a bigger scheme that the demon could not share, as there was no other logical reason to use a sealing array as powerful as the Black Scale Array.

“A demon...” Fear was written all over Cao Ning’s face. He never expected to be in the middle of an assassination attempt and certainly not one that involved the demon clans.

“Just stay calm, it’s just a demon. As cultivators we will have to confront them sooner or later. Just stand back, I’ve got this.” Although the demon was stronger than himself, three years of intense training gave him confidence and there was no fear in his eyes.

A flash of gold glittered through his eyes as he became determined to fight his way out of the situation if that became the only solution.

“You might think you are a hunter but I am no prey.” Ye Wei stepped

forward and the moment his foot touched the ground it generated a strong gravitational pull within the mist.

“It’s a shame that you are not a girl. I’ve always preferred the sweetness your females’ meat,” A sharp laughing sound came from the black figure as the demon licked his lips with a forked red tongue.

The demon then stomped the ground, and its heartbeat could be felt through the floor. The runes Ye Wei planted beneath the surface scattered under the pulsing pressure wave which caused the gravitational pull to disappear.

Demons could not use mystic stances but they did not need them. The energy in their blood made up for this shortcoming.

The black figure floated towards Ye Wei and slowly rose its arm, and a thick black, fluid-like texture floating around his hands felt similar to Qi for Ye Wei, but much colder and denser.

Ye Wei was slightly startled by the his overpowering energy and was reminded what fear felt like. A strand of silvery Qi appeared in his hand and transformed into the ancient sword he found in Bloodmist Valley, the five-star medium-grade mystic arm.

As he had never fought a demon before, Ye Wei was cautious and left no room for mistakes.

“Medium-grade mystic arm! That is something I did not expect to see... But you will be dead either way, and this weapon will become mine.” His vertical pupils dilated as he kept walking towards Ye Wei. The black figure was moving forward, but the grass underneath him did not move at all.

The black mist then faded and eventually disappeared.

“Where did he go?” Ye Wei’s heart stopped and he immediately reacted by closing his eyes trying to locate the demon with his exceptional Soul Sensitivity. It was not long after that when the courtyard was filled by Ye Wei’s will-force.

Ye Wei turned around and swung his sword backwards as the black

figure threw its heavy cold fist at his blindside.

The sword lit up and the blade caught fire as it flew towards the demon's neck at a tricky angle.

'Burning Sun Sword!' Ye Wei's strike deflected the demon's fist, and the moment it touched the demon's neck, the black figure turned into smoke and the sword went through without any resistance.

"A Runemaster? I am in for a treat!" The hoarse voice became enthusiastic. The next second, the demon appeared in front of Ye Wei, and he threw another punch. This time it was aimed at his chest.

"Humph!" Ye Wei kept his eyes closed and grunted indifferently. He shook his sword and swung it towards the sinister figure's neck.

"Whoosh! Whoosh!"

The demon turned itself into a mist of black smoke and whizzed around Ye Wei keeping a three inch distance. The sword could therefore never land and did no damage, but Ye Wei was also fine as he was able to keep the demon in a form which it could not attack. Although it looked like the fight was dead even, Ye Wei was actually slightly at a disadvantage as he could not predict the demon's movements so in order to protect himself, Ye Wei was wasting a large amount of will-force for detection.

'Such amazing speed; he is tiring to follow,' Ye Wei was startled and slowly realizing the demon was stronger than him.

'I have to set the tempo! Burning Sun Sword Wheel!' Ye Wei jumped up and swung his sword down filling the sky with fire. He then spun his sword around and created a fiery sword wheel.

The sword wheel fell down like a burning star, and the bright runic light evaporated the black mist revealing the demon behind its cover.

"Where can you hide now!?" Ye Wei struck down and pressed the sharp burning blade at the demon. The sword wheel in front of him reduced the grass and small trees in the courtyard to ash.

The black figure then moved in a strange way dodging the speeding

sword wheel and the pursuing young cultivator. The two kept attacking and dodging leaving behind a dark blur and a burning trail in their wake.

‘So he was not giving it his all earlier today when he fought Qi Xiu...’ Cao Ning was shocked by the power he felt pressuring his trembling body. Although he could see a mystic arm in play, Ye Wei’s movement were clearly swifter, and his strikes were harsher.

But Ye Wei was not the only one with precise movements, the demon was able to match his speed and deflect his strikes.

“Bang!”

A harsh noise sounded as Ye Wei finally landed a strike on the demon, and just when he felt relieved, he realized from the sensation in his hand that his sword did not do any damage; it just crashed onto the demon’s cold hard fist.

The demon’s fist was heavy, fearfully heavy like a mountain, and his strike caused Ye Wei’s hand to become numb.

Chapter 128: Selenic Ironbark Seal

The moment Flaring Light was knocked away, the demon swung his fist again, and like a bee attracted to the scent of a blooming flower he closed in on Ye Wei regardless of the attempts to dodge him.

“You are just a human Warrior, learn your place!” The demon chuckled.

‘Driftwind Steps!’ Ye Wei’s pupils dilated, and strands of runes quickly appeared under his feet. He turned into a blur and flashed three times with each step he took leaving the demon farther behind.

The ordinary Driftwind Steps would never have helped Ye Wei out of this sticky situation, but the Star Shifter form allowed him to use the incoming force of the demon’s fist like his own Qi which boosted the stance’s effectiveness. This was what enabled him to slip away from the cold fist one time after another.

“Your clan sent a demon General here?” Ye Wei’s fighting spirit was ignited by the demon in front of him, who was the equivalent of a condensed prime Warrior.

“Haha! What is this? You want to kill me?” Ye Wei’s expanding presence didn’t go unnoticed. “Hahaha! Although I have only just evolved into a General, but with the Black Mist clan’s gifts, I wouldn’t even have a problem destroying a condensed prime Warrior; I suggest that you don’t get any funny ideas. It will be painful if you make me angry!” The demon said while laughing disdainfully as he looked at Ye Wei.

His laughter intensified and became a clap of thunder which shook the ground and split the courtyard into small islands releasing a storm of dust into the air.

A strange blanket of black mist then spread throughout the courtyard from where the demon stood.

“Be careful what you wish for sometimes you will get really disappointed when you dream too big.” Ye Wei welcomed the black mist as he stepped forward and the golden runes covering his bones began to

flow.

‘First Supernova evolution!’

Ye Wei’s Qi expanded and burst out of his body which sent a rippling energy wave through the courtyard, stopping the wind caused by the demon’s stomp.

“Humm, that’s what you beat Qi Xiu with? It is an interesting amplifying stance!” The demon’s face changed when he felt Ye Wei’s energy surging upwards. In response, his dark figure became blurry again as he prepared to answer the amplifying stance.

The power Ye Wei possessed at this point greatly exceeded what a normal Warrior’s body could handle.

“You think you can get away?” Ye Wei launched himself forward, and his speed was greatly boosted by the runes under his feet. Within the blink of an eye, he was in front of the demon, and his fist sped up to a blur.

“There is a special presence on your body!” The demon’s gaze fell onto Ye Wei then he chuckled and quickly flashed away from the course of Ye Wei’s fist.

‘Triple Selenic Punch!’ Ye Wei jumped up in the air and opened his left hand. Then he stretched his fingers, raining down runes from each of his fingertips. Soon after, a beast shaped crest appeared on the back of his hand. Under the effect of Supernova stance, the power of Triple Selenic Punch was also amplified.

“Bang! Bang! Bang!”

Ye Wei’s punches fell from above leaving gigantic potholes on the ground and splashing up debris when he pulled his fist back up.

The demon knew better than to take on Ye Wei right now, so he kept evading the vicious attacks with strange movements of his body.

“So young yet so powerful. I can’t find a reason not to eat you! Your flesh must be really tasty,” The demon said as his bloodshot eyes became

cold. Ye Wei could feel a terrifying killing intent intensifying in the demonic Qi.

Another punch was thrown, but this time, the demon did not bother dodging; instead, he lunged forward and grabbed Ye Wei's wrist. Suddenly, his arm thickened, and the dark hair on his skin stood up like needles. His grip on Ye Wei kept tightening as his arm transformed to its original demon form.

"Let go!"

Feeling the pressure of the demon's piercing grip, Ye Wei's pupils dilated as he was overwhelmed by pain. He quickly swung his sword at the demon's arm forcing his transforming opponent to let go of his wrist and back off.

Although wielding a sword while punching, Ye Wei's strikes did not get any weaker and he was not slowed at all.

The two quickly exchanged fifty rounds of blows.

"Humph!" The demon grunted and made a fist with his other hand as it finished transforming. He then swung it towards Ye Wei's rune empowered punch.

A thundering rumble marked the moment the two fists met.

Ye Wei rode the explosive energy as he pulled his fist back and did a backflip returning safely to Cao Ning's side. He landed heavily in a half-kneeling position and stabilized himself placing his hand on the ground which left cracks in the ground where his finger.

After using a few more stances one after the other to fight the demon, Ye Wei's face had turned pale. Having to keep up his speed drained of him more Qi and will-force than he anticipated. Even though he had three to four times more Qi and will-force than other cultivators with at his level, the situation was turning desperate.

But the demon wasn't faring any better; his robe had long since been shred to pieces, body been worn and now he was leaning against the courtyard's wall; his casual attitude had long since vanished.

The demon General was more terrifying than Ye Wei had expected. Although under the effect of the Supernova stance, Ye Wei was not able to gain any advantage over his opponent.

“A peak ten-star Warrior with powers comparable to a two-star condensed prime Warrior and someone who knows an amplification stance, you are full of surprises!” The demon said while shaking his fist trying to get rid of the numbness; his pupils slowly changed into a triangular shape, and his glare became much more sinister.

“I admit it, I have underestimated you, but now you have left me no choice but to show you my true form,” The demon panted heavily. “Let me show you how you will meet your demise!”

Surrounding himself with a red mist the demon’s body quickly underwent a drastic transformation.

“Thump!”

“Thump!”

“Thump!”

The thundering demonic heartbeat echoed in the courtyard, and an utterly terrifying pressure caused the atmosphere to thicken to the point where the air felt almost sticky suffocating Cao Ning.

From this Ye Wei could safely assume what he was facing was not just an ordinary demon General, but a very talented one.

“Wei! Careful!” A burst of energy swept the courtyard knocking Cao Ning into the air. He then landed heavily more than ten meters back.

“I know!” Although Ye Wei was tired after the violent exchange, his dantian was actually getting stronger from the heavy Qi usage and was showing signs growing.

‘Second evolution!’

The energy level within Ye Wei’s body soared once again, and as he didn’t want to waste the limited time of the amplifying effect, he quickly drew a sequence of runes.

‘Selenic Ironbark Seal!’

Staring at the red mist coming out of the transforming demon’s pores Ye Wei did not hesitate to use his best-kept secret, the fifth stance of the Selenic Seven Stances.

The Selenic Ironbark Seal was a low-level Myst stance, and all one hundred and thirty-six runes forming the stance were specialized runes. These specialized runes were the reason why despite Ye Wei having used only enough Qi to activate a low-level Myst stance, it had the power of its mid-level counterpart.

In order to learn this Myst stance, Ye Wei had to use the second evolution of the Supernova stance to meet the Qi, will-force, and body strength requirement that otherwise couldn’t be met by anyone below the condensed prime level. With the help of the Supernova stance, it took Ye Wei more than a year to master this stance. The Glacial Emperor created the Selenic Seven and all seven of them were unrefinable stances. Despite this Ye Wei had mastered five of them!

Even under the effect of Supernova’s second evolution, it was proving hard for him to use this Myst stance composed exclusively of specialized runes.

“Zoom! Zoom!”

A sequence of complex runes appeared as Ye Wei slowly dragged his finger across the air, and his face turned paler after each stroke.

While the specialized runes were being drawn, strands of the lingering red mist were getting thicker and spun around the demon like flying serpents.

“Roar!”

The demon roared into the sky and let out a painful sounding grunt then his body inflated at a terrifying speed.

“Crack! Crack!”

The sound of tearing cloth could be heard as the demon’s black body

expanded and his black robe burst into pieces.

A three-meter tall monstrous figure emerged from within the red mist. His triangular pupils dilated as he glared at Ye Wei with red bloodthirsty eyes. His needle-like black hair stood up as his seemingly rock hard muscles were bulging.

This was the true form of a Blackmist Demon, one of the seven biggest demon clans.

Under normal circumstances, a demon's body was the same as a human's apart from their hearts. Their heart was the main source of a demon's power. When stimulated by bloodlust a demon's hearts releases its energy which transforms demons into their true form. The stronger a demon is, the better they can control their powers.

"Time to die you, petty human!" The demon roared and lunged toward Ye Wei. This happened so quickly that his body disappeared into the dark night, and the next moment, he reappeared in front of Ye Wei. He rose his hairy hand high and swung it right at the human's head.

The violent strike created a fearsome pressure wave that shook the whole courtyard and created a web of fissures on the ground. If it weren't for the Black Scale Array, the whole palace would have been shaken.

'This is it!' Ye Wei ground his teeth and finished the last three specialized runes with both of his hands dancing through the air.

Just half a second before the demon's strike was about to land on Ye Wei's head a large, wood-textured palm appeared from the specialized rune sequence with a brown glow shining through the grains.

"Boom!"

The courtyard was reduced to flat ground from just the pressure wave of the wooden palm.

Ye Wei's stance then crashed onto the demon's large hairy hand. The recoil sunk Ye Wei's body into the ground and simultaneously sent the demon flying like a kite with its string cut.

Chapter 129: Black Scale Progenitor

After flying across the courtyard, the demon's body fell heavily to the ground creating a loud rumble.

"Boom!"

Ye Wei tasted a slight sweetness in his mouth and spat out a mouthful of blood as his face turned as pale as paper.

"Ahem! Ahem!" After a moment of quietness, he coughed violently with both his arms crossed in front of his chest. He could feel his organs throbbing in pain. Meanwhile blood was dripping from his stomach, and soon his lower body was dyed in red while his breathing weakened.

At this point Ye Wei has used up all of his Qi and he felt as if his life was quickly being drained.

Defending himself against a strike that would have been lethal was not without its costs, and Ye Wei's body was anything but in a good condition.

Farther away, the demon didn't have it great either. Half of his right arm became mush and his needle like fur was soaked in blood.

"Damn it!" The demon swore as he looked at what was left of his arm with his bloodshot eyes. His body trembled in agony and his face became twisted.

"What did you do!?" He felt a fearsome growing presence in front of him while he was checking his wound. His eyes were wide with shock as he looked towards Ye Wei.

Although heavily injured, Ye Wei was calm, and he sat himself down in the lotus position with his eyes tightly shut as a mysterious energy spun around him.

The Selenic Ironbark Seal drained all of Ye Wei's energy, and his dantian was even showing signs of fracturing but instead of panicking, he started using the Falling Star form to recover his energy. While doing so he tried to repair his injured body by mimicking the energy flow he saw when the demon had transformed. After a few moments, his meridians

were suddenly absorbing primal energy at five times their normal speed, and the surge of energy then became his own.

“Zoom! Zoom!”

As the energy circulated it empowered Ye Wei. His body started levitating as energy around and inside him shone brilliantly. This energy was absorbed into his dantian and compressed into a silver energy ball.

A massive amount of Qi and will-force was accumulated inside Ye Wei's system from the three years of intense training under Master Yi, and now he had found a way to expand his body's limits; something that he failed to do ever since he became a peak ten-star Warrior.

“This is...”

The demon was startled, and his jaw fell to the floor. There was undisguised shock in his widened eyes.

“Condensed prime Warrior?”

‘How could he breakthrough now!?’ The shock made him forget about the pain he felt in his arm, and he was quickly consumed by fear.

‘He had the strength of a five... No, a six-star condensed prime Warrior under the effect of his amplifying stance, and I could just barely keep up with him in my true form! Now he's a condensed prime Warrior!?’

The demon refused to stand still and be scared, and a glow of determination grew on his hairy face.

“Ever heard of inner demons kid? They will buy me the time I need to shred you to pieces!” The demon's eyes were cold as he ignored his injuries and stomp the ground hard. He launched his enormous body forward to crush Ye Wei, ‘You're defenseless!’

The demon approached with the momentum of a landslide, and he rose his fist right as Ye Wei came in reach. Just when he was ready to deliver the killing blow he heard a playful voice.

“Tell me more about these inner demon,” Ye Wei said suddenly as he opened his eyes; his lips were curled into a smile.

“How is this possible!?” The demon was startled as it usually takes hours for a cultivator to fight off a mid-level inner demon. He had no way to know Ye Wei had already overcame mid-level inner demon three years ago at the Karma Tower in the secret realm. He forcefully pulled back his fist and leaped backwards knowing that he was looking at someone extremely dangerous.

All Ye Wei had been waiting for was a chance to push himself to his limit and only by fighting on the edge between life and death could he find out what was limiting him. Now that the demon had shown him how, it was only a matter of actually taking the time to sit down and reroute his energy in order for him to become a condensed prime Warrior.

‘Run!’

The demon’s survival instinct told him to get away as soon as possible.

“I thought you wanted to eat me? Why are you running away?” Ye Wei stared at the escaping demon and rose his hand as hundreds of runes immediately appeared in the air.

‘Selenic Descend!’

The floating runes shone as Ye Wei poured in his Qi and will-force, then they intertwined and turned into the shape of a large selenic beast.

Ye Wei grunted and the beast opened its eyes casting two beams of ghostly light.

“Swoosh!”

The beams of green light seemed to have frozen the sealed off dimension. The demon was held still when he was attempting to fade into mist and disappear into the dark night. Ye Wei took the chance to use his Root Prison stance before the Supernova’s effect ran out.

The combination of sealing effect of Root Prison and a devastating strike had always been Ye Wei’s preferred way to win as it was a much safer option in comparison to just trading blows with his opponent.

“Go back to hell where you belong!” Ye Wei shouted as he gained

complete dominance. He yelled this while glaring viciously at the black figure.

The demon could not move or dodge, he only managed a grunt and turned the mist around him into a layer of black armor covering his whole body.

The spirit beast kept striking the demon's armor and the study-looking black layer quickly began to erode away under the force of the relentless strikes. With a loud bang, the black armor shattered, and the beast's sharp claws shredded his flesh.

"You cannot kill me! I am a direct descendant of the Black Mist Progenitor! If you do, your short life will consist of being constantly chased by my clan until they find you, capture you, and give you a death more painful than you can imagine!" The demon screamed. Being a demon General he had the power to toy with cultivators at the five-star condensed prime Warrior level which was more than enough for him to kill any of the young contestants at this tournament. Though, he never guessed Ye Wei would have caused him so much trouble to the point that he could actually threaten his life.

"I don't care whose son you are!" Ye Wei threw a punch at the demon's chest.

With a cracking sound, the demon's body was penetrated. Although it was the first time Ye Wei fought against a demon, he had been taught well enough to know not to leave anything to chance. He channeled his Qi to his fist when he felt the demon's beating heart and made sure it was destroyed; if the demon with the power of a condensed prime Warrior went free tonight nobody would know how many youngsters with potential would die in the demon's hands.

Ye Wei then paused a second as he took a good look at the demon's corpse. He decided to wrap it with runes and clenched his fist to shrink it then he placed it in his interspatial bag. Normal interspatial bags could only fit a few weapons, scrolls, and pills, but the one Lin Zi Yan gave him could hold much more.

Demon Generals' blood was rare, and it was very sought after as it was used to make mystic scrolls. Ye Wei was obviously not going to waste such resources.

"Eh? What is that?" Ye Wei said when he noticed a palm-sized black scale on the ground where the demon fell. On top of it was a web of strange patterns that shone with a mysterious dark glow.

He then stooped to pick up the scale, and the moment he touched it, he felt a surge of immense energy rush into his body.

Ye Wei's muscles tightened and his body began to twitch. His face changed when facing this immense amount of energy; he felt minuscule confronting this ocean-like vast energy.

"No wonder the demon was so strong, despite him having only just evolved to become a demon General... If he knew how to use this scale properly, I probably would have died..."

Ye Wei mumbled to himself as the scale suddenly decomposed and turned into dust which became a large ball of black mist which enveloped him.

A tall, dark blurry figure appeared in the mist and entered Ye Wei through his mouth and invaded his consciousness.

A cold voice echoed in Ye Wei's head. 'Useless! How could he possibly be killed by a kid like you!? He has brought shame to our clan!' The voice had a deep, bone-chilling vibration that resounded in Ye Wei's mind. 'Kid! Return this scale to our clan or else!'

'What's this?' Ye Wei felt as if his brain was being stung by a thousand needles. He wrapped his arms around his head and curled up on the ground like a shrimp.

'What... what are you?' Ye Wei trembled in fear.

'Haha! I am one of six original demon Sages, the Black Scale Progenitor! The scale you held was shed by me before I became a demon Sage and it holds enough power to end your life!'

The demon Sage continued. 'If you take this scale back to our clan and save me the trouble then maybe I will spare your life!'

'Deliver it back to your clan? I will certainly die if I do that!' Although suffering extreme pain, Ye Wei held his ground. 'I just killed a demon who claimed to be your kin! What do you mean sparing my life you stupid demon!'

'You bug! You leave me no choice! You shall become my puppet!' The demonic energy exploded and began to invade Ye Wei's Sentient.

Ye Wei kept rolling on the ground in pain as he could not resist the demon Sage's overwhelming power.

Ye Wei's consciousness began to fade as his Sentient darkened and suddenly, just before he was completely consumed by darkness, the Mystic Mount's presence in his Sentient awakened and the darkness was evaporated by the golden light.

Chapter 130: Three-Headed Jackal

‘What is this! How can Mystic Mount’s presence be...!?’

‘Arghhh!’

The dark energy was ignited and shrunk against the golden light, and the sound of screaming echoed in Ye Wei’s head.

Under the effect of the golden energy, Ye Wei’s mind cleared as he regained his consciousness and the pain faded. He then sat up in a lotus position to calm his Qi and he felt the sacred presence of the Mystic Mount.

‘Who are you? How is the Mystic Mount’s presence in your Sentient!?’ The Black Scale Progenitor was forced to flee back into the scale on the ground but his voice remained in Ye Wei’s head.

‘It seems like your fancy title is just for show!’ Ye Wei became angry, and started to feel threatened by how he nearly lost control of his own consciousness.

‘Pfft, don't be so proud of yourself just yet! If any of us find out what’s inside your Sentient, then the clan would definitely send hordes after you, and this place will be flattened even if the whole of Ning City decided to fight us!’ The Progenitor’s voice echoed in Ye Wei’s head.

Ye Wei’s eyes lit up, and he thought how this golden presence was buried deep inside his Sentient. He honestly doubted anyone was able to find it, and also thought that if he just managed destroy the scale nobody except his best friend would know what happened tonight.

‘Naive! I shed that scale when I was transforming into a demon Sage, you don’t stand a chance breaking it unless you have the help of a Prime! Just deliver it back and save the hassle before you lose your life trying something stupid!’ the Progenitor seem to have read Ye Wei’s mind.

Ye Wei frowned, bothered by the hot potato that’s now in his hands, afraid that if he kept it, it will bring him trouble and on the other hand didn’t know how to get rid of it. However the curious side of him was

interested in keeping the scale, just in case he could somehow find use for it even though it would be next to impossible to get any information regarding the scale out of the angry Progenitor who was trying to kill him just seconds ago.

‘Kid, I’ve marked you with my presence, even the Mystic Mount’s golden light won’t be able to purge it! If you meet a demon Emperor one day they will be able to detect it right away!’

Ye Wei frowned, angry that the Progenitor kept troubling him.

‘Pfft! That’s a lot of assumptions, how many demon Emperors are there anyway. I will either be strong enough to face them or would have gotten rid of you and the scale before I ever meet one!’ Ye Wei replied bitterly.

‘Ha! Are you worried now? You are too young to play dare with me!’

Ye Wei grunted and stopped communicating with the Progenitor, he placed the scale into his interspatial ring as an extra security measure, in case the demon had acquaintances here in Ning City who could might be able to sense the scale’s presence.

The Progenitor’s hoarse voice sounded in Ye Wei’s head again, ‘do you really think that will save you? Hahaha!’

‘You old, annoying monster! Can you just stop bothering?’ frustrated, Ye Wei scratched his head, he could feel the Progenitor’s presence in his Sentient but couldn’t locate exactly where it was and how it was left there, ‘I don’t care what saves me or not, if I do meet a demon Emperor, I will either kill it or die fighting it!’

“Whoosh!”

Five minutes had passed, the black mist slowly disappeared in the night breeze and the array’s effect faded, Ye Wei once again bathed in the moonlight.

“Cao Ning, are you okay?”

Ye Wei sat in the lotus position, after regaining strength, he stood up and walked to his best friend.

“I’m fine!” Cao Ning shook his head, still feeling startled by Ye Wei’s powerful display, wondered if what he saw was real.

“Nobody can know about what happened tonight!” Ye Wei patted Cao Ning’s shoulder and said solemnly, it was not that he couldn’t trust Cao Ning, he just needed to make sure that they were on the same page.

“Yes I understand.” Cao Ning was glad and relieved to see Ye Wei was fine, trusted that Ye Wei had it under control and understood if people learned what happened tonight it will cause chaos.

“You need the rest, I’m sorry but I can’t help you any more with refining tonight,” Ye Wei looked at the dark sky and said to his frightened friend.

“Yea, I’m sure you need resting more than I do,” after bidding farewell, Cao Ning headed off.

“I wonder if the demon came specifically for me or if he was attracted by the talented youngster in general...” Ye Wei frowned and mumbled to himself, concerned, “that is not important though, I have to be careful anyway in case more than one demon infiltrated the tournament.”

‘Of course there is more than one! And they will kill you!’ the Progenitor’s voice sounded in Ye Wei’s head.

‘Can’t you shut your stupid mouth?’

‘Kid you are the first person who dares to insult me!’

‘Yea so? What are you gonna do? Bite my Sentient?’

The Progenitor was angered, quieted down.

“I’m finally at condensed prime level!” Ye Wei mumbled to himself, feeling the power of the condensed silver energy ball in his dantian and smiled.

‘Pfft! Back in the days even before I became a demon Sage I could wipe out millions of condensed prime Warriors with a sneeze and flood the whole nation with a single pool of piss!’ the Progenitor did not waste the chance to mock his host.

“You old monster, I will take a piss on that precious scale of yours if you

don't shut the fuck up." Ye Wei mumbled.

'You... disrespectful brat! You will regret your arrogance!' being one of the strongest demons there was the Progenitor was furious, demon or human, anyone who ever insulted him had been killed.

"Old guy, you said you were scaled, what's your real form? A pig demon? Manis?" Ye Wei stood up and said in a mocking voice.

'I will tear you apart sooner or later! I was a three-headed scaled jackal and had the power of ten dragons and ten elephants! I was born with the wisdom to understand the force behind the universe! How dare you!'

"Oh wow! That's amazing!" Ye Wei opened in mouth wide, pretended he was impressed.

'Ye so shut up!'

"You are pretty impressive for a dog indeed, I apologise for my foolish words," Ye Wei chuckled.

'Did you just called me a dog!?'

'I am a three-headed scaled jackal!'

"Erm, excuse my ignorance but I thought jackals are dogs were the same thing."

'As I told you before, I promise you i'll tear you apart and suffer a painful death!' the Progenitor maddened, roared in anger.

"Yea you have said it many time, I wonder when you will actually do it," Ye Wei ignored the threats and kept cultivating, "why are you so obsessed? Dogs are related to jackals anyways you will make many dogs feel bad if they knew you look down on your own kind."

'One last time, I am a jackal, not a dog!'

"Wolves are related to jackals too right? You do have great connections!" Ye Wei shrugged, he didn't know much about demons but he surely enjoyed enraging one.

On the other side, the Progenitor was furious, wishing he was in his real

form. Didn't feel like he wanted to talk to Ye Wei anymore.

That meant Ye Wei could finally have a moment of peace to feel and get used to his new found powers.

Historically the gap between Warriors and condensed prime Warrior was immense, a lot of peak ten-star Warriors were not able to overcome themselves and push their limits enough to force the transformation and end their lives as the former.

Becoming a condensed prime Warrior was more than just a cultivational achievement, in terms of status condensed prime Warrior marked when a cultivator is strong enough to start their own martial families or branch out to other cities if the cultivator already belonged to an established force.

Condensed prime Warriors' title were named that way because of how their Qi behave, in rest, their Qi clumps into a silver ball in their dantian, which ultimately allowed more energy to be stored and increased the density of it.

For each breakthrough after a cultivator reached condensed prime level, a golden fissure will appear in the silver ball of Qi; the single crack on Ye Wei's silver ball represented that he was a one-star condensed prime Warrior.

"I can start learning the sixth of the Selenic Seven - Selenic Triple-Primal Sword!" Ye Wei mumbled to himself joyfully under the moonlight, as he could finally look to complete all seven of Glacial Emperor's set; The first four stances were high-level Spirit stances while the fifth was a low-level Myst stance, and the sixth was a level higher at mid-level.

Ye Wei sat down and crossed his legs, under the dark sky he began to learn the sixth Selenic stance while he consolidated his cultivation.

Chapter 131: New Challenges

On the next morning, all young cultivators gathered at the amethyst platforms again, enthusiastic and eager to start the second day's fight and expand their capacities.

South Star opponent of the second day was Ling Yin Academy, which came twenty-eighth last year. South Star was able to claim victory easily, gaining another point without even showing Ye Wei.

The win streak continued for two weeks. Apart from their first opponent, South Star did not really face any worthy enemies, which gave Ye Wei a chance to rest, consolidate his cultivation and strengthen his arsenal by learning the Selenic Triple-Primal Sword and the third evolution of Supernova stance.

On the fourteenth day of the tournament, South Star finished early again, and Ye Wei decided to join the other youngsters to watch the fight between Frozen Sun City's Golden Wood Academy and Seven Star School, as the dark skinned boy, who had made eye contact with him at any opportunity, would be fighting.

"Ye Wei? It that you?" A clear bell-like voice sounded from the noisy crowd.

Ye Wei's gaze fell onto a young lady in her early twenties. Her dark green dress was skin tight, elegantly complimented her curves and made her look extra sassy. Her lengthy body and pretty face made her stand out in the crowd like a crane in a flock of chickens.

"Xue Yao?" Ye Wei recognized her facial features.

"Took you some time!" Xue Yao's brows rose as she smiled.

"How have you been?" He could feel Xue Yao was already a condensed prime Warrior.

She did not answer directly, but instead narrowed her eyes and assessed him, "You've grown a lot and became really handsome in three years! Where is your girlfriend? Did she come with you?"

“Hey... Don't joke around like that!” Ye Wei's face became red, too embarrassed to answer.

The two then decided to catch up using voice transmission technique as the crowd was getting noisier.

Turned out Xue Yao, Hong Xun, Zhou Hou and the others met the descendants of the Glacial Emperor's disciples and picked up their legacies. Everyone of them improved quickly in the course of three years.

“It's a shame Hong Xun and the others couldn't make it here. We all got together a few times after we left the labyrinth, we were made to swear our loyalty to whomever inherited the Glacial Emperor's legacy, or we shall be smited by the heavens. We were also told that the inheritor will have a jade trinket, using which he could communicate to us...”

Xue Yao then looked at Ye Wei, who was surprised to hear what have just been said to him, and assumed that she already knew who became the Glacial Emperor's inheritor.

Seeing that Ye Wei was chatting with a beautiful girl, Liu Jian, Chen Mo and the rest of the South Star crew became a bit jealous, but at the same time admired Xue Yao as they could also feel that she was a condensed prime Warrior despite her young age.

“So, little Wei, why haven't I seen you fighting?”

“I did on the first day, but haven't had the chance to since then.”

“Oh well, my brother is representing Golden Wood Academy, and I have to go now! Catch me later!” Xue Yao heard the crowd going wild and noticed someone on the platform had been injured. Worrying that it might have been her brother, she quickly went away.

“Take care!” Ye Wei waved goodbye. Ye Wei felt grateful for all that Pu Yuan had done, surprised by the set up that gave a small but powerful force in his command. During the three years, Pu Yuan had been treating Ye Wei with great patience as if Ye Wei was his own apprentice.

In Ye Wei's mind, Master Yi and Pu Yuan had been treating him as if he was family.

In the evening

“We have been pretty lucky with the matchups. Apart from the fight with Polaris Academy, we won every match with relative ease even without Ye Wei.”

“Let’s maintain our win streak!” everyone in South Star felt elevated from the great results so far.

“The tournament is almost half over, and we are one of the only five schools with a clean record. I think that says a lot! Well done guys!”

“Yes, but that means we have to pay extra attention when we face Galaxy Academy, Zhoutian Sword School, Tri-Solar School and Seven Star School. We are aiming to finish in the top three!” Vice-principal Xu He looked around him and smiled gladly. “During our best run a long while back we managed to finish seventh, but I think we will definately top that this year!.”

“Tomorrow we will be facing Tri-Solar School. Their team’s average cultivation level is higher than ours. Furthermore, they have Shi Hun Tian, one of the God’s Seven among them, be prepared for a tough fight!”

“If we win tomorrow’s matchup, then the odds are we will surely be in the top three. Boys and girls, please, do your best! And, Ye Wei, we will be depending on you to deal with you know who.”

Everyone simultaneously looked at Ye Wei with wary, although he had defeated a powerful cultivator known as Qi Xiu, a God’s Seven is another level of existence. They were imagining the possibilities of their teammate becoming one of the seven.

“I will do my best!” Ye Wei smiled and nodded.

“The human race is more laughable than I remembered it to be. Calling seven children God’s Seven? Get over yourselves! Hahaha!” the Progenitor chuckled.

Ye Wei’s face turned black, upset by the Progenitor’s mockery.

After the pep talk, all of the students went back to their own rooms to prepare for the day after, feeling a bit nervous.

The fifteenth day of the tournament arrived, as the starry night eventually diffused into a bright morning with clear sky. The amethyst platforms were already warmed by the sun, when the students began to gather.

“We have an interesting matchup ahead of us today, neither had South Star or Tri-Solar dropped a match, they will undoubtedly fight their hardest to keep their record clean!”

“Interesting? I don't see how Tri-Solar can lose this match. Shi Hun Tian is one of the God's Seven! Two years ago he came into the public's attention, rose like a star out of nowhere and took the God's Seven title. And for the past two years, he had been training behind closed doors! He could only have gotten stronger!”

Although most of the crowd recognized Ye Wei's strength, not many thought he could actually overcome Shi Hun Tian and become a God's Seven.

“I wouldn't be so sure just yet, apart from South Star's first match, we didn't really see Ye Wei fighting. What if he didn't show all of his strength when he fought Qi Xiu?”

Everyone approved of Qi Xiu and knew him from two years ago, when Shi Hun Tian and him both took on the same God's Seven, where Shi got the title and Qi Xiu fought a good fight before he eventually lost.

Some of the audience thought South Star had hope, some of them thought it was dead even, and most of them thought Shi Hun Tian would be able to finish South Star single-handedly. Although they didn't have the same opinion, all of them were looking forward to see this unfold.

“Hey, Xu He, did you hear the crowd? They don't think you are going to win!” Tri-Solar's vice principal, Shi Xiao Ran, chuckled.

“It won't be the first time when we become the unfavourite winner and it certainly won't be the last.” Xu He replied coldly.

“Haha! I admire your confidence. What do you say to making this more interesting?” Shi Xiao Ran took out a hand fan from his possession and smiled indifferently, “If you win, this mystic arm is yours!” His tone became slightly provocative.

“Medium-grade two-star mystic arm, you are generous.” Xu He narrowed his eyes.

“It’s fine if you don’t want to play with me!” Shi Xiao Ran laughed.

“Well if you insist to shower me with gifts...” Xu He took out a knuckleduster from his possession.

“Let the fifteenth round begin!” the City Lord’s voice echoed, the audience below and above eventually took their seats as the contestants stepped on the amethyst platforms.

The audience cheered when they saw Shi Hun Tian walking close to platform three.

“That’s him! Shi Hun Tian! I haven’t seen him fight for two years! Do you guys still remember the fight when he defeated Mu Kong within fifty blows? I couldn’t believe a fifteen year old was able to beat a God’s Seven!”

“Of course I do, I don’t think this fight will be much worse!”

Shi Hun Tian began to stare at Ye Wei from across the martial platform, “I will make you forget about Qi Xiu and show you the distance between us is more vast than you could ever have imagined!” He mumbled to himself.

Feeling the burning gaze, Ye Wei casually looked back at Shi Hun Tian and continued talking to Cao Ning.

“This Ye Wei kid doesn’t seem to care at all!”

“Arrogance is the mother of regret, let’s see how it’s gonna go.”

Contestants of both schools lined up on the opposite sides of the platform. After two weeks of demanding fights, everyone from South Star, even the less experienced ones were looking more fierce, more confident.

Unlike the first day, most of the influential audience on the cloud platform had their eyes on platform three looking forward to see South Star, a school that they hardly cared about not long ago.

Most of the patriarchs and the representatives from the Green Army already had an idea about who they would like to recruit after watching the fights for two weeks, excited that two of their favourites will be facing each other.

“It doesn’t really matter whoever comes out on top, they are both fit for the purpose,” the intimidating armor they wore made their smiles look slightly awkward.

Ning City’s patriarchs were also eager to discuss their opinion before the fight started.

“I think Shi Hun Tian is going to carry his school to score a win today, two years ago he had already shown great potential. I think he must have broken through to become a condensed prime Warrior since then.”

Defeating Qi Xiu at his best was undoubtedly a feat and it did not fade in the audience’s minds, but Shi Hun Tian too defeated Qi Xiu, not only was that a convincing victory, he also had more opportunities to show his capacities while fighting some of the stronger schools.

The crowd slightly tipped towards, supporting Tri-Solar School, and waited impatiently as the young cultivators warmed themselves up.

Chapter 132: Class

“Lu Zheng, you’re up!” Shi Hun Tian casually waved his hand and smiled, as his eyes unconsciously landed on Ye Wei, the only opponent he cared about today.

“Okay!” An arrogant young man stepped forward from the group, looking eager and energetic.

“Who of you will fight me?” Lu Zheng’s cold gaze swept the South Star camp.

The faces of the South Star cultivators changed, they were not expecting their opponent to send an eight-star Warrior right away. On South Star’s side, the only cultivator, who was at the same level, was Liu Jian, apart from Ye Wei.

After a brief moment of silence, Ye Wei slowly walked out of the group.

“He is an eight-star Warrior, let me deal with him.” Liu Jian was a bit confused, as the vice-principal’s idea was to save Ye Wei for the last.

“Let’s finish this quick, I have a stance to learn. If you want to fight, I will train with you when we’re back,” Ye Wei said indifferently, “You guys did all the work these past weeks, I want to move a little.”

The crowd went wild, to their knowledge Ye Wei was the strongest cultivator in the South Star team, but even so it would have been a bit of a stretch to take on one of the top five contestants on his own.

Some of the young audience, who saw a chance of South Star winning off Ye Wei’s back, began to change their minds.

“Why is he destroying his chances!? The only way he could win is to land a lucky strike using the stance he beat Qi Xiu with! How is he going to have enough Qi and body strength to do it, when he finally faces a God’s Seven?”

“This is ridiculous!”

“Some people just prefer learning their lessons the hard way. I don’t see

how Shi Hun Tian will take this insult lightly.”

Lu Zheng was also surprised that Ye Wei would be his first opponent, “Haha! You think you can take all of us on your own? I would like to see if you really have what it takes to challenge our ace like everyone else suggested,” He grunted then stomped the ground, launching himself towards Ye Wei.

“Boom!”

The moment his feet left the platform, Lu Zheng’s presence intensified, and a layer of Qi materialized over his body. Facing an opponent like Ye Wei, he saw no point in hiding his cultivation.

“What!?”

“He is a peak ten-star Warrior too?” The audience’s eyes widened as they saw the unexpected. They have been following Tri-Solar’s fights, but Lu Zheng never appeared to be more than an eight-star Warrior.

“Tri-Solar School hid him so well! Damn! I should have seen it coming! They are looking to finish at the top, it sucks to be one of the South Star youngsters right now!”

“They might not even need Shi Hun Tian to win the matchup in the end! They surely have prepared for this specific match with South Star!”

The power Lu Zheng just displayed just improved Tri-Solar School’s impression in the audience’s hearts, as any cultivator with peak ten-star Warrior cultivation was considered top tier contestants.

The wild crowd’s cheer and chatter boosted Shi Xiao Ran’s confidence, his smile grew to an arrogant shape as he glanced at Xu He.

“I apologize in advance, if our youngsters hurt yours, you will have to forgive them! They are just doing what they are supposed to in a tournament!” Shi Xiao Ran chuckled and said.

“Vice-principal Shi, the fight had just begun, I can only say the same.” Xu He said casually with pride.

On the martial platform, Lu Zheng drew sequences of runes with both

his hands as he flew towards Ye Wei, immediately activating two stances with a quick surge of Qi.

‘Yaksha Palm!’

‘Lightning Leash!’

Within moments, light of the glowing runes sequences brightened the purple platform.

Thick bolts of static energy tangled around Ye Wei and constricted his body like snakes, while a terrifying Yaksha appeared behind him, striking him with its palm. The fearsome force wave swept across the platform, the shrill sound made the audience cover their ears.

“Damn, this looks to be quite a deadly move!” the South Star youngsters began to worry.

“Careful, Ye Wei!”

Nobody expected Lu Zheng to lead with such a sinister combination, used by a ten-star Warrior. Although both of the stances were only high-level Spirit stances, they looked to have the power to challenge even a lower-leveled condensed prime Warrior.

“I didn’t know Tri-Solar had any top tier Cultivator except Shi Hun Tian!”

“Judging by what we saw of Ye Wei, I think it is safe to say South Star already lost this matchup. I mean, their ace would need to waste half his strength and energy on the first fight! How is he suppose to beat a God’s Seven? Unless they too hid something like Tri-Solar did!”

The crowd was heated, coming up with crazy predictions and theories about how Tri-Solar School had planned this all along so they might be able to finish first or second. They wondered how Ye Wei would answer the threat.

“A constricting stance with a heavy strike? I will give you credit for your creativity! It’s almost like seeing myself fight. It’s a shame your stances are weak, if only you have refined them...” Ye Wei mumbled to himself

while casually drawing the runes for Selenic Armor stance.

It was the same defensive stance as before but infused with Star Shifter stance. Now a condensed prime Warrior, the light armor seemed to be thicker and smoother. However that didn't stop Ye Wei from being held still with the lightning bolts.

"If you can't untangle yourself, you're probably done for!" Lu Zheng's eyes went cold as he stared at Ye Wei. The Yaksha growled and struck his palm at Ye Wei's head, its palm picked up strands of lightning as it passed through the constriction stance and doubled its power.

"Shi Xiao Ran is undoubtedly a great teacher, not many youngsters master the stances they use well enough to synergize them!"

"Supreme Chen Feng once said, 'the best moves are never just strong stances on their own, they are often combinations of stances that compliment each other well,' if we didn't see this well planned combo coming, Ye Wei certainly didn't!"

"This moment might decide the match."

The audience up on the cloud platform were ecstatic to see the masterful display.

"Ha!" Lu Zheng's face showed a light of complacency when the Yaksha's palm landed on Ye Wei. The whole platform shook as a small pit appeared at where Ye Wei stood.

Some of the audience cheered but the South Star camp was quiet, afraid their ace had just lost.

"I guess we will have to wait another day until we get to see a God's Seven fight."

"Splendid!"

"That was a great combination! If I was Ye Wei, I wouldn't feel too bad losing."

The youngsters around platform three discussed excitedly.

'I got this!' Lu Zheng rejoiced, but the contentment did not last. His

stomach felt tight as he senses told him something was wrong.

As the debris and dust slowly fell on the ground, Ye Wei's figure was revealed. He was standing in the eye of the settled storm, his clothes completely clean and his light armor intact.

"This is impossible! How did that happen?" Lu Zheng widened his eyes, wondered how the combo that possessed power comparable to a Myst stance had no effect on Ye Wei.

"Hiss!"

Everyone gasped as they saw Ye Wei's graceful posture, scared, realizing it had been a mismatch from the beginning of the fight. Lu Zheng was completely outclassed, and the stance combo taught Ye Wei about Lu Zheng more than it did damage.

"That was your win condition correct? It was nice, but I'm afraid it's my move now." Ye Wei glared at Lu Zheng and disappeared in a flash.

'Searing Selenic Palm!'

Ye Wei reappeared in front of Lu Zheng, his palm strike carried a bit of a spinning momentum as he infused the flow of Star Shifter form into the stance.

"You really should dodge this." Ye Wei said coldly.

Before Lu Zheng could even come up with a way to defend himself, the burning palm landed right on his stomach, too quick for him to even react. The force sent his body flying like a spinning top towards Tri-Solar School's camp.

Two of the Tri-Solar youngsters jumped up to protect Lu Zheng from crashing onto a wall, but when they caught him, they too were caught in the spin. The three of them flew back ten meters and fell heavily.

Silence fell in the crowd, if something small as a needle was dropped on the floor, it would still be heard. Widened eyes were set on the three motionless youngsters on the floor, startled, some of the audience even forgot to breathe.

“How... How was that possible? The two who caught him were seven-star Warriors!”

“Outclassed! Outclassed by a monster!”

“This boy has unfathomable strength!”

The crowd lit up after a moment of quietness, forced to swallow their doubting words and looked forward to see a God's Seven in action, fighting Ye Wei, who hardly spend any energy to defeat a peak ten-star Warrior.

The audience on the cloud too were excited to see a possible title fight.

Chapter 133: For the Title

“Could today be the day one of the seven will be replaced?”

“Anyways, I’m so excited! I have been waiting for the moment when someone worthy challenges one of the seven!”

Near the martial platform, the gathering cultivators were simmering with excitement, and apart from the participants, most of the youngsters did not take a side. Rather, they were excited about the upcoming fights and wanted to see an inspiring battle.

Horried by what they saw of Ye Wei, all the Tri-Solar student took a step back unconsciously. Even Shi Hun Tian’s face displayed concern as he recognized Ye Wei as being a serious threat.

On the young cultivators’ side, Shi Xiao Ran’s smile quickly evaporated. He was worried about what Ye Wei’s victory over Lu Zheng, the peak ten-star Warrior, implied.

“I’ve underestimated you!” Vice-principal Shi glared at Ye Wei with an earnest look.

On the other hand, Xu He smiled satisfied as he learned more about what Ye Wei was capable of. Watching Ye Wei, it was apparent that he had improved greatly since he fought Qi Xiu.

Up on the cloud platform, Ning City’s patriarchs and the City Lord were also impressed.

Ye Wei stood in the middle of the amethyst platform as he stared out at the Tri-Solar camp and calmly said, “It would be a waste of time if I have to fight you one by one, so why don’t you all fight me at once? That way we can all prepare for tomorrow sooner,” He wished to learn a couple more things before fighting Galaxy Academy and Zhoutian Sword School; he completely disregarded his current opponents.

The Tri-Solar camp did not take the insult lightly. They were trembling with anger, and they could only stare back at Ye Wei since none of them dared to make a move, not after seeing what Ye Wei did to Lu Zheng, as

he was the second best cultivator on their team.

“It has been a while since someone acted so arrogantly in front of me!” Shi Hun Tian coldly glared at Ye Wei. His eyes were twitching, and his voice trembled with anger. “You are a great cultivator, but I will show you what real greatness looks like. There is still the difference of the heavens and the earth between you and the God’s Seven!”

A terrifying presence burst forth from Shi Hun Tian’s body, and his dense Qi quickly wrapped around his body like a long silver ribbon looking like he was bathed in brilliant moonlight. He then clenched his fist and the Qi around his body condensed forming a glowing layer of light armor at his command.

‘No wonder why he was chosen as the Glacial Emperor’s inheritor. It only took him three years to grow so much from being a mere Student!’ Xue Yao calmly thought.

“Sis, you know South Star’s Ye Wei right?” Asked a fourteen year old boy from Golden Wood Academy as he rubbed his bruised, swollen face. He said, “I don’t think he stands a chance against this God’s Seven. Honestly, Shi Hun Tian decisively swept our team!”

“Shut your mouth! just because you’re deaf doesn’t mean you have to air your stupid thoughts out loud. Do you want more bruises on your face?” Xue Yao aggressively asked. “You guys couldn’t even win against the Seven Star School!” She said as she slapped him on the back of his head.

“Hey! I am your brother! Couldn’t you at least show a bit more affection?” Xue Yao’s brother grumbled then bitingly commenting back, “We performed well, and even Luo Mu Xue couldn’t do anything against their ace!”

Xue Yao frowned recognizing that her brother made a good point. She hoped that Ye Wei would not be hurt when South Star advanced further in the competition since the standard of this year’s tournament was extremely high.

The audience gathering around platform three lit up as Shi Hun Tian displayed his aggression; the space was quickly filled with cheering

noises and the sound of heated discussions.

“Tri-Solar is sending Shi Hun Tian in next!”

“Yea, if anyone can take down Ye Wei, it will have to be a God’s Seven!”

“What if he can’t beat Ye Wei? He just became a part of the seven not too long ago. It wouldn’t be good for him to lose the title...”

The comments were loud enough to be audible on the platform, but Ye Wei did not react to anything he heard; his expression and posture conveyed his calmness. He smiled as if he was in his own world.

Shi Hun Tian smiled and stomped the ground sending a growing fissure from the amethyst martial platform’s side to where Ye Wei stood.

When the crack reached Ye Wei’s feet, Shi Hun Tian launched himself towards the platform. His body turned into a blur disappearing before the startled audience’s eyes. Although they couldn’t see where he went, they could loosely locate him from the shrill sound of him breaking through the air.

The next second, Shi Hun Tian reappeared right in front of Ye Wei with his fist drawn behind his head. Without any hesitation, he threw it at Ye Wei. The bright armor left a trail as the fist broke through the air with the momentum of a comet.

“Shi Hun Tian is a condensed prime Warrior!!”

Ye Wei’s face did not flinch as he gently lifted his hand. The fluidity of his movement made it appear much slower than it actually was as Ye Wei’s hand stopped Shi Hun Tian’s heavy fist. He made everything he did look like child’s play.

A dull rumble sounded as Ye Wei nullified the momentum of Shi Hun Tian’s fist. He did not move an inch; it was as if he had just caught a feather with his hand.

“Eh?” Shi Hun Tian felt his fist held still by a steel clamp. This caused his face to change as he learned more about his opponent’s strength. “So what? I will get you with my next punch!” He grunted while staring at Ye

Wei with an arrogant gaze. He clenched his other fist and threw it at Ye Wei's head at a tricky angle.

"Nice strike!" Ye Wei narrowed his eyes. He clenched his other hand into a fist and threw it right back at Shi Hun Tian's strike without letting go of his left hand.

"Bang!"

Their fists collided with the pressure of mountains. They clashed against each other which formed two conical shaped pressure waves that swept the platform.

The dense, sharp pressure waves plowed into the amethyst martial platform leaving deep, uneven scars in the newly repaired platform.

The pair then disappeared in a flash giving out bursts of shockwaves as they exchanged round after round of blows.

"Too fast!"

"I can't see anything!"

The young audience exclaimed, but at the same time felt a tinge of jealousy and frustration. Seeing someone close to their age displaying such frightening talent caused them to realize they would probably never reach the level of mastery they were seeing.

The sky was clear, but the fight made the audience feel like they were in the middle of a storm because of the shocking winds and gusts coming from the two fighters on the platform.

After a few moments, a blurred figure split into two, and Shi Hun Tian was sent flying backwards like a kite with its string cut. He heavily landed ten meters from the point of impact, just inches from the edge of the platform leaving another small pit on the amethyst.

"How... How is this possible? Was Shi Hun Tian defeated before he could even use a stance!?"

As things slowed down, the audience excitedly looked upon the scene as they could finally see again. Ye Wei gently floated down and landed on

the martial platform looking relaxed.

Contrary to what most of them expected to see this morning, his opponent, a God's Seven was disappointingly defeated...

A lot of the onlookers expected to see an even fight between Ye Wei and Shi Hun Tian, but now they saw how unexpectedly one-sided it had become. They started to wonder if Ye Wei would become one of the top God's Seven if he kept performing this way.

The young cultivators couldn't help but exchange looks of shock.

However, the faces on the cloud platform did not show the same degree of amusement. They knew how strong Shi Hun Tian was, and therefore understood he was holding back. They could also see Ye Wei had reserved most of his strength, which did not come as a surprise to them. It was rather common for cultivators to test each other's ceilings and look for each other's weaknesses when the fighting began.

Although it was within Shi Hun Tian's calculation that Ye Wei would be a tough opponent, he never expected he would need to use more than seventy percent of his strength in the probing part of the battle just to stay on his feet.

"You are really annoying me! And I really cannot tolerate brats!" Shi Hun Tian wobbled as he stood back up. He glared at Ye Wei showing his contempt for the uppity brat. "I will knock your teeth out!"

Shi Hun Tian made a few hand seals in front of his chest, and his Qi came rushing out like a surging flood; it slid out and spread across the platform.

"Shi Hun Tian didn't just break through during his training; he also consolidated his strength! He is fighting like he had been on the level for years!" Liu Jian, Chen Mo, and Joe Yin could tell Ye Wei's opponent's cultivation from the shocking Qi he was emitting. They were worried as they knew the cultivation differences between a Warrior and a condensed prime Warrior. They also knew that Ye Wei could not overcome this difference.

“So this is what it takes to become one of the God’s Seven...” Liu Jian bitterly shook his head. He was upset with himself because he knew that Shi Hun Tian was two years younger than himself, and he was ashamed that a younger cultivator was so much further ahead of him

“Ye Wei is just a peak ten-star Warrior, right? I don’t think there will be a fight after all...” The South Star youngster felt a bit deflated as they thought their winning streak was about to come to an end. He was greatly worried for Ye Wei, and not sure if Ye Wei would be able to defend himself as they still could not feel any energy from Ye Wei’s body.

“Just when I thought the God’s Seven was an overrated title, he redeemed it! A seventeen year old condensed prime Warrior!? I cannot believe this!”

“Shi Hun Tian is angry!”

“I don’t think I’ve seen him this serious before!”

“This is Ye Wei! We might all have to thank him for what we are about to see...”

Chapter 134: Lion's Fall

“A one-Star condensed prime Warrior!? I wonder how Ye Wei will deal with him...” Xu He’s wary face constricted. He was still unsure about what Ye Wei’s entire strength looked like, and he grew concerned from his uncertainty.

“Shi Hun Tian broke through to become a condensed prime Warrior!?” The sudden burst of energy at platform three distracted the young cultivators on the other martial platforms. When they recognized the Qi belonging to those who caused such disturbance, they became enviously upset.

None present, including the competing teams close by, could ignore the power they felt.

Shi Hun Tian grunted. Although he did not gain advantage in the past trade, he remained confident with his cultivation. He planned to climb higher up the ladder of God’s Seven later in the tournament. He decidedly would not let himself lose to a dark horse like Ye Wei.

Looking at Ye Wei’s relaxed smile, Shi Hun Tian was furious; it was the first time someone took him so flippantly.

“I will destroy you in the name of God’s Seven title!” both of Shi Hun Tian’s hands flew in the air. All of a sudden, hundreds of glittering runes appeared where his hands were.

“That is brother Shi’s forbidden stance, Tempest Sword, now, watch and learn guys...” the Tri-Solar youngsters gloatingly gazed at Ye Wei.

“I can’t believe he is using a Myst stance right away! It looks like he really dislikes Ye Wei; oh well, that brat deserves it!”

They had seen this stance before, but, now, it was a completely different experience. Shi Hun Tian used every fiber of his being executing this stance. Apparently, he was taking no chances of defeat.

“Nice Shi Hun Tian, you finally used a stance! Does that mean I am worthy?” Ye Wei looked at the Qi storm in front of his opponent. He

sensed an unignorable surge of sharp dense energy brewing. Quickly, he channeled his own energy. The silver ball in Ye Wei's dantian added a yellow glow to his Qi as it rushed out of his dantian into his meridians.

'Searing Selenic Palm!' Ye Wei's slightly golden Qi stuck onto the will-force of his fingers and became runes as his hands danced in the air.

Like every other stances in the Selenic Seven, they were created by the Glacial Emperor based on specialized runes, which made them more powerful than the stances composed of normal runes of their respective levels.

"Bang! Bang! Bang!"

Ye Wei launched globes of magnificent green runic flames from his palm strike. Flying and clashing towards the Qi storm, they collided with it erupting a rumbling sound that echoed throughout the whole mountain. All eighteen martial platforms on its flat peak were shaken by the terrifying burst of imploding force as the stances collided, affecting all other fights occurring.

"Whoosh!"

A beam of flowing light shone down from the cloud platform, creating a tough and thick barrier over platform three, Separating South Star and Tri-Solar's fight from the rest of the tournament.

"Amazing power!" the fighters on the other platforms simultaneously stopped fighting. They unconsciously looked towards platform three where they sensed the enormous Qi disturbance.

Enough reasons allowed people to believe either side would win the fight. Though, the scale of the fight alone was a sufficient reason for anyone at the tournament to put down what they were doing and pay attention to Ye Wei and Shi Hun tian instead.

Back on the cloud platform, the important figures were astonished. Amazed at the power they felt from these young contestants, they still found it hard to realize such strength could come from such small age.

At the beginning of the match, Shi Xiao Ran was confident about Shi

Hun Tian's victory, but when he felt on his cheek the scorching Qi presence Ye Wei's stance was giving off, he nervously clenched his fist, quite uncertain now. Although he was at a high place, being the vice-principal of a well established school, a medium-grade mystic arm was still something of a rarity and in the end the school's reputation was also on the line.

"In the name of God's Seven? What does that even mean? Why don't you show me what you can do instead of just constant talking!" Ye Wei looked at the raging energy, with a cool gaze. He channeled his dense Qi and vast will-force, topping up his Selenic stance.

The cyan flames immediately burned hotter and brighter; they began to outshine Shi Hun Tian's Qi storm.

"How can a Spirit stance suppress a Myst stance?! This is impossible!" Shi Hun Tian was furious. He was expecting to beat a higher ranked God's Seven with this stance; the stance he was told by his master that he was not strong enough to learn before he broke through to a condensed prime Warrior.

Feeling the Qi storm's power fading and softening, Shi Hun Tian screamed at the sky. Lines of runes that were imprinted on his arm shone silver as he began to activate a stance he was told not to use unless in critical moments.

"Lion's Savagery!" yelled Shi Hun Tian as his body twitched and strengthened to the level of a two-star condensed prime Warrior.

Just like the Supernova stance, this amplification stance allowed its user to access their Qi, primal energy in a condensed form within a time period. Nevertheless, comparing to the Glacial Emperor's stance, Lion's Savagery was not even half as powerful.

Ye Wei rose his brows at the sight of what his opponent was doing, He then drew a rune on his palm, injecting his Qi onto the runes engraved on his bone and activated the Supernova stance.

'Supernova first evolution!'

Ye Wei's body strength greatly expanded, reaching close to a three-star condensed prime Warrior level.

Due to his foundation, Ye Wei benefited massively from his major breakthrough and was stronger than other cultivators of the same level; the supernova stance took that advantage a step further in power.

'Lion's Roar!' Shun Hun Tian grunted as a wall of his Qi rushed towards Ye Wei like a tsunami. He gained a presence of the king of the beasts, his muscles bulged up and left a deep footprint on the ground each step closer to Ye Wei he took.

The amethyst platform trembled..

"Terrifying!"

"No wonder why he is a God's Seven!"

The gathering crowd was still too scared to stay where they were as they felt the immense flood of energy surged forth even despite the shield the City Lord had already set up. They took a step back from the frontline, afraid they would get hurt.

Meanwhile, Galaxy Academy and Seven Star School finished their fights as quickly as they could. They were more interested in watching the title fight than continue their own fight. They rushed to platform three at almost the same time.

"That's Lion's Savagery! Ye Wei pushed Shi Hun Tian this far?!"

"The kid from South Star is very special; I think he will be challenging us sooner or later!"

Galaxy Academy's Feng Yi, Xiao Yuan, and Xuan Yu joined the crowd, the youngsters standing close to them respectfully took a few steps back giving the three local celebrities space, so they could get a better view on the fight they seemed to have a sincere interest in.

On the other side of the platform, a few young cultivators from Seven Star School gathered. The dark skinned boy, Tu Fu Sheng and his seductive looking female friend were also paying attention to Ye Wei's

every move.

“The kid from South Star improved since we last saw him fight!” the girl bit her lip and rolled her eyes in admiration.

“Haha, so what?” Tu Fu Sheng chuckled, “he is no match for me!” a strange, aggressive green glow lit up deep in his eyes.

“Hey, don’t forget why we were sent here... he hasn’t contacted us for weeks now. It’s very possible that he has been captured or even killed by a human cultivator. I think it’s up to us to finish the task, stay attentive!”

“Stop being annoying! I am not stupid.” Tu Fu Sheng grunted.

The girl chuckled and disappeared into the crowd.

Back on the platform, Shi Hun Tian was approaching Ye Wei with heavy, ground shaking steps.

“I didn’t expect to use the Lion’s Savagery... this was the stance that won me the fight to become God’s Seven. I will make you suffer!” Shi Hun Tian’s face contorted from the suffering as his bones and muscles experienced by being twisted and stretched by the amplifying stance.

“You know an amplification stance too? It’s a shame it’s not comparable to mine.” Ye Wei shook his head and chuckled as he mumbled.

Ye Wei drew a sequence of specialized runes as he looked at the muscular figure walking towards him, ‘Selenic Ironbark Seal!’

The runes flowed fluidly as he kept channeling his Qi into them; a gigantic wooden palm appeared fifty meters high in the air. The runes’ twist and turns became wooden layers resembling a grainy bark pattern.

“Now, I’ll show you why stance quality matters, but don’t worry you can thank me later.” Ye Wei slowly extended his arms, making the stance fall on Shi Hun Tian’s head.

The wooden palm landed on Shi Hun Tian, smashing and pushing him towards the platform’s edge even against the force of Lion’s Savagery.

The two waves of energy clashed into each other similar to two tall

tsunami waves. The terrifying force of the impact caused a quake at the platform. It sank a few meters into the mountain surface as the foundation became loose.

Under the pressure of Selenic Ironbark Seal, Shi Hun Tian could not control his movements although he stood upright. His body became a pick, his feet, the sharp hook, dug two deep ravines into the damaged platform as his body was pushed deeper and deeper into the damaged amethyst.

“How could this be!? I can not even fight back!?” Shi Hun Tian’s eyes widened, incredulous at the action taken place, ‘what kind of monster am I facing?’

Shi Hun Tian furiously channeled the remaining Qi in his meridians to fight Ye Wei’s Selenic stance, but his energy was of no use as he could not gain momentum under the immense physical pressure the Selenic Ironbark Seal imposed. Within seconds he was out of energy and unable to even slightly weaken the incoming strike.

“You are too small a cat to call yourself a lion,” Ye Wei shook his head and clenched his fist; the wooden palm immediately fell, burying Shi Hun Tian in the martial platform entirely.

“Boom! Boom! Boom!”

The immense energy of Ye Wei’s stance did not stop; it just kept pressing into the platform.

The gathering audience behind the City Lord’s shield were stunned and knocked off balance by the escaping energy. They could only imagine what kind of force Shi Hun Tian was enduring; however, none of the three strongest Galaxy youngsters were afraid. Rather, they looked at each other and smiled excitedly.

“That was Shi Hun Tian with the amplifying stance...”

“So, Feng Yi, what do you think of this kid now?” Xuan Yu frowned and looked to his side. He anticipated his trustful comrade’s opinion.

“There was nothing I saw that you didn’t. I think I will be the one

fighting him the day we face South Star.” Feng Yi slowly exhaled. It was the first time he felt this threatened by someone of such a young age.

Xiao Yuan and Xuan Yu nodded and exchanged a look. They were surprised that someone was able to intrigue their strongest cultivator. They never had seen him take a fight this seriously.

Back on the martial platform, Ye Wei slowly canceled the Selenic Ironbark Seal, retrieving the vast energy back into his body. He left the wounded Shi Hun Tian whose robe was torn into pieces inside the platform, panting for air. He had no strength to move as the amplifying stance’s effect faded.

All the audience widened their eyes as they witnessed the unbelievable.

“Shi Hun Tian lost? He barely fought back! Has he gotten weaker or is Ye Wei just incredibly strong?”

“Oh god! How powerful is Ye Wei?!”

Another thought struck the crowd as the dust started to settle down.

“God’s Seven, the person left standing is now the new God’s Seven!”

“Ye Wei has replaced Shi Hun Tian to become a seven!”

The South Star youngsters couldn’t help themselves; they screamed and danced.

“We have a God’s Seven in Green Moon City! And he is from our school!” Cao Ning shouted, Joe Yin, Liu Jian, Chen Mo and the rest were cheering from their hearts, shivering in ecstasy.

Until now Liu Jian was never truly happy with Ye Wei taking his place as the academy’s best cultivator. Nonetheless, as Ye Wei brought the title to South Star, he completely gave up the idea of competing with Ye Wei.

“How was that possible!?” Shi Xiao Ran shocked and startled, looked at his motionless student. He could not believe Shi Hun Tian was defeated by someone a whole year younger.

“Vice-principal Shi, I believe we had an agreement?” Xu He narrowed his eyes and chuckled. Winning the mystic arm did not mean half as

much to Xu He as his team sweeping off Tri-Solar school, one of the crowds favourite, with only Ye Wei.

“Of...of course!” Shi Xiao Ran’s face was completely red, undisguisably embarrassed.

No one in the crowd expected the match to be over this quickly. Nor did they expect it would be such a one sided fight. Notwithstanding, Yu Wei’s strength spoke for itself. They were now looking forward to see if the new God’s Seven could carry on his momentum and topple the other six which would gain him a higher rank during the course of the tournament.

Chapter 135: Monument Stance

Not only the youngsters, but the audience on the cloud platform was also surprised.

“It looks like this Ye Wei kid had a major breakthrough not long ago; I am pretty sure he was not a condensed prime Warrior on the first day when he fought Qi Xiu.”

“He hasn’t been a condensed prime Warrior for longer than Shi Hun Tian has, so I am a bit surprised to see this result!”

“This kid is very extraordinary, he might even have the ability to challenge Feng Yi!”

The patriarchs and other powerful cultivators began to speculate and share their opinions and thoughts on this dazzling, rising star.

In the middle of the cloud platform, the City Lord and the Green Army generals smiled satisfyingly, They were overjoyed that a talented youngster was on the rise because mankind depended on new blood to fight the wild beasts and demons, to keep the lands at peace.

After this battle, Ye Wei’s name was imprinted on everyone’s mind as the newest God’s Seven, and as a heaven defying cultivator. The spectators would later find themselves relishing the memories of how Ye Wei fought and defeated Qi Xiu and Shi Hun Tian, two youngsters who were expected to go far before they were beaten by Ye Wei.

Ye Wei was declared the winner after the City Lord removed the shield, and the judge went onto the platform to check on Shi Hun Tian. Shortly after Shi Hun Tian jumped off to join his classmates and return to the palace.

As the group was leaving the martial platforms, a group of young cultivators from Seven Star School decided to walk towards the South Star camp, and the dark skinned boy looked at Ye Wei with an aggressive glare.

Ye Wei felt a jolt go through his body as their eyes connected.

“What is his name?” Ye Wei turned to the side asking Chen Mo.

“Tu Fu Sheng, from Seven Star School. He is quite mysterious. He has only fought twice in these two weeks. The first time he defeated Qi Xiu, and the second time he defeated Golden Wood Academy’s Luo Wu Xue. While it is true that Qi Xiu was weakened after fighting you, but Tu Fu Sheng beat him with ease!” Chen Mo said sincerely.

“Humm,” Ye Wei nodded and rubbed his chin caught in deep thought. The presence he sensed on Tu Fu Sheng was similar to what he felt when the demon he fought was transforming.

Back in the palace, after a few hours of cultivating in the courtyard, Ye Wei took a scrolled letter out of his bag. The scroll had a black hue and it was made from the same material as mystic scrolls. Inspecting the scroll closely, he could see glows of runic light from the other side of the scroll shining through. This was the letter of recommendation given to him by Master Yi when they spoke about applying to the Runemaster Union.

“In the next three days our team will not be facing any worthy opponents... Liu Jian, Chen Mo, and the rest should be able to deal with the upcoming matches. We won fifteen fights in a row; it shouldn’t affect our ranking much if we drop one or two.

Their winning streak put South Star into top five; they were far ahead of most teams apart from fighting Zhoutian Sword School, Galaxy Academy, and Seven Star School, Ye Wei really saw no point in participating.

Ye Wei looked over the letter of recommendation again and realized that right now was the best time to fulfil his promise to his master; the best time to take the Runemaster qualification examination as the tournament’s schedule would not allow him to take time off later on when South Star is matched up with stronger opponents. It was not only his master’s decision, becoming a part of the Runemaster Union meant a lot to Ye Wei as well.

After confirming his plan with the vice-principal, Ye Wei packed the essentials and headed down the mountain to one of the busiest parts of Ning City’s center Vermilion Bird Street where the Runemaster Union’s

regional branch was located.

He could see an enormous bluestone statue from afar before he even stepped foot on the street. The statue was over three hundred meters tall and had the shape of a charismatic middle-aged scholar holding a book with one hand with his other arm folded behind his back. One could tell by the expression on the statue's face that the subject was absorbed into whatever he was reading.

The statue captured the living essence of none but the Combat Master, one of the three fabled Sages. He was the one who set up seventy-two holy conservatories and invented mystic scrolls.

This Combat Master statue was hollow, housing Ning City's Runemaster Union branch inside it.

"So this is what the Combat Master looked like?"

Ye Wei stood before the towering statue as he admired the grand structure and reverently bowed three times. He was not the only person who did so, even the passerbys would bow to it as they all knew mankind would not have lived through the savage wild beasts' ambushes and the sinister demons' hunts without the contribution of the Sages.

All of a sudden, Ye Wei felt a penetrating gaze as the statue lit up. He felt as the mysterious glow shone throughout his body. He was startled and thought. 'How can a statue possess such a powerful presence?'

'The Monument stance... older generations of human are indeed capable of greatness...' A demonic voice of admiration rang in Ye Wei's Sentient.

"Monument stance?" Ye Wei mumbled confusingly.

'It harvests the power of belief! I created the stance when I became renown. It is a stance that splits the users' consciousness into all statues and monuments that are connected to them. With every bow, every gesture of appreciation, the belief, the positivity, will be converted into energy which the user receives!' A bright voice echoed in Ye Wei's Sentient.

A figure then appeared in Ye Wei's Sentient, one that resembled the

shape of the statue he stood in front of.

Ye Wei was shocked as he saw the image of the Combat Master. This was something he never imagined would appear in his Sentient.

‘Hey black scales, It’s been a while,’ The Combat Master’s voice echoed as if it came from a great distance despite this it was clear to the letter.

‘This is a prime example of mankind’s despicable behaviour! Using the people’s power for your own benefit; if it wasn’t for this stance, none of the three Sages would have been able to match the peerless strength of us demons! Ha it took more than a few centuries to accumulate enough power for your presence to spot me. How pathetic!’

‘Mankind is united, and a lot of this generation’s ancestors sacrificed their lives to pass on this stance to secure the safety of the future generations, to safeguard civilisation’s foundations. You demons only know how to destroy! Sometimes you even consume others of your kind just to become a tiny bit stronger; it’s good that the power of the heavens can recognize who the despicable one are at least!’

‘Say whatever you want you silly Sage. The day I return to my true form, I will turn all your statues into dust!’ The Progenitor did not disguise his disdain, clearly he was jealous of how the heavens’ power protected mankind but not his race.

The Combat Master giggled, happy to have touched his old foe’s nerve. He then switched his attention to Ye Wei.

‘Your Grace!’ The mysterious stance left Ye Wei in awe as he respectfully bowed. He never expected to find the Combat Master’s consciousness in a statue, and certainly did not expect it to enter his Sentient. ‘There are statues of the Sages all across the land does that mean that the Sages’ consciousness are spread throughout the world!?’

The Combat Master nodded and smiled at Ye Wei, ‘I was attracted here by black scales’ presence, and the next thing I knew I could feel the old mountain’s presence too once I got inside your Sentient! I think destiny has brought us together. I see that you are contaminated by demon blood.’

‘Judging by how that dog’s presence is trying to take over, I am sure you have slain one of the Black Mist clan. Be sure to keep the scale for your own safety, you have to be careful, black scales bites! You know what? I will place protective runes on you so that the demons can’t detect anything in your Sentient,’ The Combat Master said as he rose his right hand sending a faint light deep into Ye Wei’s mind.

‘Damn it, Xiang Xian! Why do you have to stick your big nose into everything? You just made this personal!’ The Progenitor screamed and shouted, furious that his plan of leaving a traceable mark in Ye Wei’s presence had failed.

‘Haha, you have shed many more scales in your time; it’s okay if one or two of them become useless! Just look at it as a small souvenir you gifted this kid,’ Xiang Xian, the Combat Master’s laugh eventually faded, ‘You, kid, what’s your name?’

‘My name is Ye Wei!’ After a little pause, realizing he was close to falling victim to the Progenitor’s plot without even noticing, Ye Wei answered politely grateful for the Combat Master’s intervention. ‘Thank you for saving my life your Grace!’

Xiang Xian casually laughed, ‘Being a sage, it’s my responsibility to protect mankind, not to mention you have the mountain’s presence in your Sentient. I am sure it will lead you to me in the future. Keep up your effort, and defend what you know is worth defending! The scale in your possession contains the power of the Black Scale Progenitor. When the time comes you will find out how to use it to your advantage... Goodbye for now!’ His voice sounded while dissipating.

Ye Wei suddenly sobered up as he shook his head to make sure he was awake. He widened his eyes and looked at the statue with a respectful gaze.

‘Kid, don’t get cheeky now just because Xiang Xian placed a few measly protective runes on you; you are far from safe! I will prove to you and him that demons are superior to humans!’ The Progenitor screamed testily.

‘Humph! You evil dog if it was not for the Combat Master, I could have

fallen to your schemes! If you keep being annoying and having funny ideas, I swear I will place the scale into a piece of dog shit!' Ye Wei was becoming more fearless as he thought about all the Sages' statues everywhere. He realized he was more protected than he had previously thought.

'How dare you!...' The Progenitor softened up, afraid that Ye Wei, being a wild child he was, would actually place the scale in such filthy places; if that actually happened he would never be respected by other demons again.

Seeing the Progenitor turn quiet, Ye Wei smiled satisfyingly as he found out that pride was the one of the demon's weak spots.

Chapter 136: The Jade Quest Walls

Ye Wei slowly rose his head and stepped through the doors at the statue's feet. At the exact moment his toes touched the jade tile, he was stopped by an impressionable young lady.

"Sir, you're in the Runemaster Union. If you are not a Runemaster or have not been referred here by a Runemaster then I am afraid you must leave the premises," Li Xue had attended the Ning City branch for three years, and with just a casual glance she could tell that Ye Wei was not an official.

She politely and professionally dismissed Ye Wei from this sacred ground. She knew from experience that many student cultivators who participated in the tournament paid their branch a visit during their free time. That being the assumption, she did not realize Ye Wei was a student of a Runemaster. Furthermore, Li Xue ruled out the possibilities of Ye Wei carrying a letter of recommendation with him, considering his young age.

"I am here to participate in the Runemaster qualification exam!" Ye Wei replied with a friendly smile and a look of acknowledgment, knowing his right to be there.

"A participate in the exam?!" Li Xue looked closer at Ye Wei; she was astonished to hear the words that came out of this boy who looked no more than sixteen years old. 'I have worked here for three years as an attendant, and I have seen more talents who were sent here by their masters than you can ever imagine; you are just too young even to make the joke funny!!'

"This is not a place for silly jokes brat!" Li Xue, losing her temper, refused even to consider the possibilities of Ye Wei's words being real. Her voice deepened as she became angered by what she thought was a prank.

"No really! I am here to participate in the exam. Here is my letter of recommendation." Ye Wei reached inside his bag for the letter. He then respectfully handed it over to Li Xue.

“This is a letter from... Master Yi!?” Li Xue opened the scroll; her eyes followed the flowing runes and widened as they recognized a scrappy signature that was well known.

Master Yi was one of the few powerful Runemasters looking to become a grand-Runemaster. His name and reputation had crossed the wall of Green Moon City long ago.

“I understand now; I apologize for my attitude, please follow me this way,” Li Xue carefully handed the letter back over to Ye Wei. It was unimaginable for her that this child in front of her was recommended by such a famous figure in the region.

“It’s okay! Don’t worry!” Ye Wei nodded and followed Li Xue deeper into the statue.

Once Ye Wei exited the entrance room, a spacious hall appeared before his eyes. There was a handful of white-haired but baby-faced elderly standing in the middle of the hall chattering.

Towards the front of the hall, there were seventy-two large jade walls. Each of them was around two meters tall and six meters wide. Their surfaces were engraved with thousands of tiny shining letters.

All of the elderly were well-established Runemasters who focused their attention at the jade walls, pondering.

“May I ask what these are?” Ye Wei pointed at the walls, curious and confused.

“These are the jade walls of answers!” Li Xue whispered near Ye Wei’s ears, afraid that she would disturb the elders’ thought processes.

“The Runemaster Union spans across the continent, even across borders, and is spread throughout the mainland; but at the same time, we want our members to be unified and connected. All the union members can access this wall in their local branch. They can pay a small fee to have a question they need to be answered listed on one of them.”

Ye Wei saw the similarities of runic flow between the statues’ energy and these walls,’ fascinated, he thought that Xiang Xian must have

helped setting up the union when they build the communication system.

Informative information spilled out of Li Xiu, “when a member answers any of these questions; they will gain contribution tokens. This currency is technically a hundred times more valuable than silver or gold! Members can use these tokens to buy powerful stances, specialized rune manifestos or even demon blood, beast bones, enchanted scrolls and other ingredients needed to craft mystic scrolls and arms.”

“Answering these questions on the walls is one of the main ways for members to gain these tokens. The questions further away from the ground are harder than the ones near the ground. Solving the harder questions reaps more reward for the elderly. Nonetheless, each reward equals the difficultness of the answer..” Li Xue tried to compensate her previous rudeness to Master Yi’s apprentice by acting as professional as she could.

“Okay, I see now, thanks for the information.” Ye Wei answered gratefully. He appreciated Li Xue’s friendliness and professionalism. He then glimpsed at the questions lower down on the wall, seeing if he could answer a few of them.

“These issues are too hard for you. As well, they are not what you are here for, so let’s just leave them with the experienced and wise. The exam you will attend is going to occur in one of the side halls. We have a daily quota of only twenty-two candidates; however, you are lucky that you arrived this early. If you had come an hour later, then you would have to visit again earlier tomorrow. ,” the pair quickly walked through the hallways towards the exam venue.

“Here we are, is there anything else I can help you with before I take my leave?”

Ye Wei shook his head, “No, I am fine. Thank you though for your help.”

“If you need any more information you know where to find me.” Li Xue smiled, bowed and then returned to her post.

Inside the sidehall, a small crowd had gathered and chatted away. They turned and looked briefly at Ye Wei as he walked in. In their minds, they

thought he was just a waterboy and of no consequence. His age made him appear lesser than he truly was. They did not heed Ye Wei and returned to chatting about the exam.

Ye Wei sat on one of the chairs near the hall's entrance. Waiting patiently, he sat cultivating until a keyword caught his attention.

"Brother Lu, you have the exam in your pocket, right?"

A youngster was surrounded by three cultivators in their thirties, showered by words of flattery.

"Yeah, Lu Feng, you are only twenty-two, but if you pass the exam, you will be the record-holder for the youngest cultivator ever qualified to become a Runemaster in the outer region! None of the cultivators in the thirty-six cities has qualified younger than the age of twenty-five!"

Lu Feng was handsome in a conventional way. He wore a discreet, yet wicked smile. His faded gold robe that he was wearing made him look even taller and slimmer than he actually was. In his hand, he held a folding fan gripped with his long and slender fingers. His hair was styled in a high and tidy bun. Regarding appearance, he was the kind of person that attracted and pulled in the opposite gender's attention; nevertheless, his cockiness and wittiness, at the same, turned them off.

"Lu Feng..." Ye Wei frowned. He recognized the name from the conversations which occurred three years ago between his family and the Du family. He examined Lu Feng, giving the evil figure who schemed against his family a face. The man who put his family in danger, 'this person is the villain behind the Du's plan to take over our ancestral land!' Ye Wei was furious. He remembered why he should be grateful for his Master for the rest of his life. If the Runemaster had not intervened, his family would have existed today.

After the incidence at Ye family's arena, Ye Wei did research on Lu Feng during his free time. He learned that Lu Feng was the legacy apprentice of one of the three active Runemasters in Green Moon City. Who was also rumored to be the result of an affair between Master Mu and a woman with a powerful background. Concerning cultivation, Lu Feng was very

gifted. He was already a four-star condensed prime Warrior at the age of only twenty-two, and he was ahead of a lot of older cultivators that were his senior.

“Lu Feng, don’t forget about us when you pass the exam! We will even work for you!”

“Only if you are willing to be led by me. Then, of course, yeah! There is always strength in numbers, and I’m sure we can work something together!” Lu Feng smugly laughed. He enjoyed having his ego stroked; the attention he received raised his eyebrows up showcasing his pride.

Now, contrary to grovelers, none of these three flatterers were weak. They were all talented individuals from influential martial families. Additionally, their masters were no weaker than Master Mu. They were only trying to make a connection to his mother’s family.

How come? Lu Feng’s mother was a family member of the Qing State. The Lu’s not only one of the four biggest families in the state were also related to one of the dynasty’s three royal families. There were a handful of returned prime Warriors in the Lu family.

The Lu family did not approve of Lu Feng’s identity not just because he was a product of an illicit affair but that his mother was a part of the family. However, the family officials decided if Lu Feng could prove himself worthy by passing the Runemaster exam, they would include him in their clan.

Once the Lu family recognized Lu Feng, his status would change dramatically. Knowing that information and his talents, the three cultivators, were trying every trick in the book just to get themselves on this future star’s side.

Near Lu Feng, a few middle-aged cultivators were standing close together avidly discussing something.

“I don’t think my rune consonance is good enough for refining and creating stances; I never thought it would be this hard to pass the exam. This is my sixth time here!” one of the participants, an older man who looked sixty years of age complained to his friends.

Besides Ye Wei and Lu Feng, there were around twenty people in the sidehall. Most of them were more than forty years of age and had taken the exam in the past.

“It is what it is. I think that the tests are rather simple, especially, when it comes to refinement and soul sensitivity, creating stances are hard but only in a relative sense. I was fiddling with a few runes a couple days ago and made a mid-level Spirit stance in twelve hours,” Lu Feng leisurely stated. He had been training with Master Mu to become a Runemaster ever since he was young. This time he confidently came to Ning City to pass the exam only in one try.

All of the faces in the side hall shown bewilderment at what they just heard. Lu Feng managed to create a mid-level spirit stance!? Impossible! A stance creation was the third and last task of the entrance exam which most of the returning participants could not accomplish. They found it incredulous to believe that a man half their age was capable of such a feat and they were not.

Most stances are made of runes; the process of creating stances is mentally and physically demanding. Therefore, it is usually imperfect. Creating a stance required a space for improvement, just like the stances Ye Wei helped his cousin and Cao Ning perfect.

To refine a stance, one must first learn how the stance works. Ye Wei had understood five out of seven of the Glacial Emperor’s Selenic stances. Because the stances were a creation of a genius, he was having problems finding defects in the Emperor’s creations.

Moreover, when it came to creating stances, it was even harder than refinement. To create an original stance, one needs to have great understanding in individual runes and the mental capacity to incorporate runes together as a whole. One needs to know how to make them hold the users’ Qi as well as amplify the energy as it flows through the rune sequence.

‘I must do better than Lu Feng!’ Ye Wei was finally feeling a pressure he had never felt before. He clenched his fist as he stared at the cocky acting

man. The same man who plotted against his family three years ago.

Chapter 137: Round One

Everyone waited patiently in the side hall.

“Little man, are you working for the union?” One of the middle-aged participants narrowed his eyes at Ye Wei. Ye Wei’s posture was seemingly uncomfortable and rather out of place.

“No.” Ye Wei shook his head.

“Well... are you... Is it possible, you’re here for the qualification exam?” The middle-aged cautiously questioned Ye Wei while widening his eyes in disbelief.

“Yes!” Ye Wei gently nodded while sitting in the corner. He was trying his best to keep a low profile. It was not in his interest to introduce himself, directly or indirectly, near Lu Feng.

The middle-aged man gave Ye Wei a strange judgemental look. ‘Isn’t one young brat enough? That arrogant Lu Feng is only twenty-two, and this kid is what? Like ten years younger than that? Someone needs to do something about martial family’s kids getting in here all because of their damn connections!’

Slowly realizing how strange it was for Ye Wei to sit all alone in the corner, Lu Feng and the people around him began to shown interest, and they all looked over in his direction.

Before they could get a good look at Ye Wei’s face, an official from the Ning City Union Branch entered. He had the skin complexion of a middle-aged man. He was dressed in a long, gray robe. Embroidered on the cuffs of the robe were seven tiny star shapes.

“Silence!” The official scanned around him. His hoarse voice quieted the sound of the chatter.

Everyone closed their mouths and looked respectfully at the man in the gray robe; however, humbleness looked slightly awkward on Lu Feng’s face.

Ye Wei, like everyone else in the room, focused on the official, but most

importantly, he felt relieved the crowd shifted their attention away from him.

‘A seven-star Runemaster!’ Ye Wei pupils dilated. He was startled as he noticed the embroidered stars close to the official’s hand.

A Runemaster’s rank is not exactly only related to cultivation but instead involves a distinguishment between a Runemasters’ knowledge of runes and their contribution to the Union. Green Moon City’s Master Mu, who was a ten-star condensed prime Warrior, was merely a five-star Runemaster.

A member’s privileges were directly proportional to their rank. Most notably, when a member became a ten-star Runemaster, they will gain the right to command some of the Runemaster Union’s armed military force.

The Runemaster Union’s influence spread to every corner of land where men lived. Their army, the power behind such influence, could only be matched by the Royal Green Army.

This was one of the reasons why Master Yi, a ten-star Runemaster, was feared by many influential figures in the region. Even though he based himself in a tiny city in the middle of nowhere, if needed to, he could send the union’s army anywhere he wanted. With the cost of a terrifying amount of contribution tokens and a small squad of the union’s forces, they were able to reduce any city in the region to debris.

Before his deep voice spoke again, the middle-aged official’s stern gaze slowly examined everyone. “A lot of you have have taken part in this exam before, more than once if I may add, for those who don’t recognize me, do not cheat!”

Zuo Qiu Ming’s static gaze made everyone in the side hall respectfully stand up straight. His intimidation and authority rose the hair on the participant’s arms and left some secretly shaking inside.

He cleared his throat and took a deep breath, “I, Zuo Qiu Ming, represent the Runemaster Union, any cheating will be seen as provocative behavior against the union, which we do not tolerate! Anyone who is

caught cheating, regardless of your reason to do so and your family background, will be executed immediately. No exceptions! Even if you are the dynasty's leader!"

"Sacred statue!" Zuo Qiu Ming satisfyingly nodded as he saw the humble faces, his devout voice echoed the hall.

"Boom!"

The ground shook, a three-meter tall Combat Master statue rose with a deafening rumble. Its golden glow radiated an immense pressure. Ye Wei felt the coercing presence both within his body and his mind. He found this experience similar to what he felt at the tournament when Ning City's returned prime Warrior leader gave the opening speech.

Under the mental influence, all the participants' minds were clouded. Nothing concerned them except the insuppressible need to bow and worship the Combat Master.

"Bow to the sage!" Zuo Qiu Ming lowered his head, bent his back forward. Everyone else followed suit. Although Ye Wei was not affected by the coercing presence, he too bowed to the figure he greatly respected.

"Bow again!"

"And the last bow!"

"The Combat Master invented mystic scrolls and set up the union, for every Runemaster and cultivators who look to become one. He is our master, and we serve him! In no case may any of you show disrespect to the founding sages!"

After everyone had bowed three times, the golden shine of the statue faded as well as the presence, 'Very well, let the examination begin!' Zuo Qiu Ming said.

"Your first task is to refine mid-level Spirit stance, Quadruple Spirit Sword. Your aim is to improve it by a level before this stick burns out!" he pulled an incense stick out of his interspatial bag.

'Quadruple Spirit Sword?' all the contestants included Ye Wei frowned,

displeased since they heard the stance name they were not familiar with. They were wary, knowing how difficult it was to refine a stance of that level, the first task of the exam and already it was a difficult one.

None of the participants imagined the first task would be this hard, after all, stance refinement was usually a time-consuming process. Lu Feng, on the other hand, appeared casual and relaxed.

Zuo Qiu Ming flicked his sleeve and rose his right hand, leaving behind a trail of brilliance. After twists and turns, a sequence of runes appeared in front of him, with the spark on this fingertip he lit the incense stick held in his other hand.

The sequence of eighty-three runes immediately became the focus of all the contestants. They all concentrated their thoughts and began to study the stance carefully.

Ye Wei glanced at the runes sequence structure briefly. He then closed his eyes to feel the energy flow with his Soul Sensitivity, 'considering its many flaws, this is a powerful stance!' he immediately realized why refining Quadruple Spirit Sword was chosen to be the first test. He noticed that the stance could be refined by different approaches. Therefore, the task could have more than one correct answer.

It did not take long before Ye Wei picked one of the paths and began to refine Quadruple Spirit Sword.

Time flew by fast; the incense stick Zuo Qiu Ming held in his hand turned to ash on the floor.

"Time's up! Everybody's hands down!" his hoarse voice rumbled in the contestants' ears, shocking them out of their meditative thoughts.

Out of all the twenty-two contestants, eight looked dreadful while the rest looked either satisfied or ecstatic.

"Any volunteers to present the result?" Zuo Qiu Ming's strict, judgemental gaze landed on the group of contestants.

"I will go first then!" Lu Feng smiled and casually walked out of the flock. He swiped his arm sideways effortlessly, and eighty-three runes

appeared in a flash. A total of four twinkling spectral swords came alive. The swords floated between himself and Zuo Qiu Ming.

“Now condense!” Lu Feng’s gaze became focused and cold. The four spectral sword merged and became only two swords. Both of them were four feet long; their energy exceeded when they were in their previous form.

“Peak high-level stance!” the participants were left in awe while watching surges of Qi bursting out of the spinning swords in the air.

‘How could he upgrade the stance all the way to advanced high-level!? I found it challenging just to improve it by a level as requested in such short time!’ one of the returning participants mumbled to himself. He was obviously deeply shocked and envious by Lu Feng’s mastery in rune knowledge.

“Good. This youthful man is not just a handsome face...”

“Brother Lu, impressive stuff!”

“I think I just became a fan!”

The three flatterers were even more humbled than they were before the beginning of the exam. Of course, as adulators, they would take any opportunity to befriend Lu Feng. They made sure he heard every fawning word they could come up with.

Lu Feng replied with an indifferent smile.

“Pass!”

Zuo Qiu Ming nodded at Lu Feng with an appreciating look. He approved the speed and quality of the refinement and thought that Lu Feng’s talent was impressive considering the ridiculously short amount of time he gave the participants to finish the task.

He was impressed, but his experience of hosting the entrance exam reminded him that the first task was the easiest of the three. Throughout the years, he had seen many peerlessly talented contestants fall to the soul sensitivity test and most notably the stance creation test.

“Next!” Zuo Qiu Ming shouted.

One by one, the contestants went up and showed what they managed to do with the stance in front of everyone else, out of the twenty who were called up by Zuo Qiu Ming, eleven of them did not pass the test.

As the first test was the easiest, Zuo Qiu Ming was a little stunned that half of the contestants were eliminated by it.

“Little man it’s your turn now!” Zuo Qiu Ming said with a curious smile on his face. Never had he seen a child of such a young age take part in the entrance exam in his whole career. In his mind, he was impressed enough by how Ye Wei had obtained the letter of recommendation from Master Yi as informed earlier by Li Xue.

Even though he was impressed, he mumbled to himself, “Hmm, Lu Feng did exceptionally well, we haven’t had participants scoring this high for at least half a year, regardless of age, I wonder if this kid will be the same?.”

Ye Wei calmly and confidently stepped forward. He held his breath, slowly extended his arms, and spread his fingers. Allowing his will-force and Qi travel smoothly in his hands, eighty-three runes burst out from his calculated movements.

“Zoom! Zoom! Zoom!”

Zuo Qiu Ming and the participants who passed the test nodded as they saw four spectral swords appeared above Ye Wei’s head.

They were all surprised that such a young boy was able to reproduce the stance correctly at all! They never considered Ye Wei to be able to do anything else but just look more innocent and cuter than the rest of the participants.

“Very gifted indeed! When he becomes my age he could probably get through this with flying colors!” Oblivious to the teenager’s identity, Lu Feng was interested in Ye Wei joining the force he was trying to put together.

“Condense!” when everyone thought Ye Wei’s capability was limited by

just learning the stance and using it, Ye Wei's comparatively childish voice sounded in the side hall, the four swords merged to become two five feet long fiery blades.

“What is this smoothness and strength, this is certainly a high-level Spirit stance! This kid made it!” everyone widened their eyes in shock, overwhelmed by the act itself done by just a kid!.

‘I can accept the twenty-two-year-old bringing the stance up a level, but this kid is just sixteen!’ Zuo Qiu Ming's smile grew larger, ‘advanced high-level... wait...’ he suddenly perceived that Ye Wei's Quadruple Spirit Sword had a different Qi flow compared to the other refined stances he saw earlier.

‘The energy burst is not as fierce; nevertheless, this stance's Qi is sustaining incredible well!’ Zuo Qiu Ming tried to identify what exactly made Ye Wei's stance different than everyone else, but could not accurately pinpoint it.

“Not bad, not bad at all kid!” Zuo Qiu Ming walked up to Ye Wei, gently patted his shoulder, “you are very talented and interesting!” surprised by both Ye Wei's age and talent.

Chapter 138: Sensitive

Zuo Qiu Ming pondered about the little kid's potential, He knew the possibility of Ye Wei becoming a certified Runemaster within the age of twenty was certain even if the prodigy did not make it through today.

'This is not just talent. It is not natural that a boy his age can fully refine any stance. This young monster will definitely become something one day!' he thought to himself.

This was not the first time Ye Wei became the center of attention in front of an older crowd. He just humbly nodded to Zuo Qiu Ming while the other participants burned what he just achieved into their minds.

Lu Feng was also fascinated and stunned that Ye Wei was actually able to pass the first round. It was unusual for him to be surprised with anyone since he held himself in such high esteem. Nonetheless, Feng thought that regardless of the final result he would recruit this young cultivator just for the sake of his potential. He was even ready to send his men to properly groom this soon to be Runemaster.

Ye Wei noticed Lu Feng was observing him while he quietly went back to passing participants; he wanted the attention to disappear, to absorb himself in the background, and to observe not to be observed. Ye Wei was on guard. Attentive and alert, he was still intimidated by the man responsible for his cousin's coma and the physical and mental scars of his family members. He could not dictate if Lu Feng was still planning on disturbing the Ye family's peace.

"This is the end of round one! The second test to begin is a Soul Sensitivity test!" Zuo Qiu Ming waved his arm, dismissing the failed participants while focusing his attention on the passing participants. .

"Whoosh! Whoosh!"

Zuo Qiu Ming swiftly moved his hand to form various hand seals and shapes, out of them flashed and projected a purple light, which touched all the way to the side hall's ceiling.

The million of purple rays intertwined and transformed into a roofless square room; each of its glittering runic walls were ten meters tall and wide.

“Listen up! You will soon enter the room above us, one at a time, for the duration of an incense stick to burn. In there, you will find yourselves attacked by two things. The first will be bolts of human-shaped Qi. The second will be mirages that resemble these bolts. Your mission is, with your Soul Sensitivity, identify the harmless mirages from the dangerous bolts.”

“You may attack the bolts to defend yourselves, but they may not hit you. Concerning the mirages, they will break on contact, if you break more than ten of them, you will be disqualified.”

“Zhang Han! You look nervous, so I’ll let you go first. Remember this is your last chance, focus and make it count!” Zuo Qiu Ming sarcastically spoke, looking at the old man with white sideburns.

“I appreciate the opportunity be to first Zuo, thank you!” the fifty-seven year old gradually stepped forward. His wrinkled face twitched out of nervousness.

The Runemaster Union’s rulebook stated that one may not take the entry exam more than nine times, and this was Zhang Han’s ninth attempt. Although he was a five-star condensed prime Warrior, his lackluster runic capabilities weren’t able to pass him through the entire exam.

“Are you ready?” Zuo Qiu Ming authoritatively asked. Upon seeing Zhang Han determined and ready inside the transparent cubic room, Zuo lit the incense, starting Zhang’s task.

The runes on the wall luminescent purple when Zuo Qiu Ming grunted., preparing himself for the bolts and mirages. Suddenly, they began to whizz and multiple energy bolts shot at the Zhang Han. All of this was occurring instantaneously akin lightning flashes in the night sky so too were the bolts and mirages flashed and attacked the old man.

The old man closed his eyes and let his senses take over. He tried

separating and strike the bolts from the mirages and allow the mirages to pass him.

“Boom! Boom! Boom!”

Beams of red light appeared above the cube as the elder participant kept accidentally striking the mirages.

“It’s over!” Zuo Qiu Ming shook his head and shouted as he saw the eleventh beam of red light appeared above the cube.

Zhang Han slowly stepped out of the cube. He let out a long, disappointed sigh; he appeared worn out and deflated, expired, “I thought I was going to make it this time...”

“Only one out of a hundred thousand becomes a Runemaster, don’t let it get you down. You are a five-star condensed prime Warrior, any influential figure would see you as an asset, with or without the Runemaster title!” Zuo Qiu Ming tried to remind Zhang Han that he was still an impressive cultivator.

Everyone in the room was shocked to hear the old man’s cultivation level stated. None of them could believe a cultivator of that level would fail the exam.

‘You shouldn’t be sad just because you are a part of the majority.’ Zuo Qiu Ming stated a fact. He had seen too many failing participants act emotionally.

“I guess it’s just not meant to be...” Zhang Han mumbled. He faked a smile, shook his head, and turned away to leave the side hall. Exiting the exam, his posture mirrored the desolation in his heart.

“Little boy, do you want to go next? I really look forward to seeing your performance! If you do pass this exam, believe me, the whole state will know about it, hahaha!” Zuo Qiu Ming said jokingly while switching his attention to Ye Wei.

In fact, Zuo Qiu Ming did not think Ye Wei could or would pass the exam, despite his encouraging words. He could not comprehend the idea of a teenager becoming a qualified Runemaster. He was just curious to

see how far Ye Wei could get.

“Yeah!” Ye Wei determinedly nodded. He got inside the cube while the other participants were chatting to each other.

“He is so young! I have not seen anyone this young participating. Let alone passing the first round so easily. I wonder if he excels when it comes to runes!”

“Soul sensitivity only develops with age and cultivation, and he is still what? Sixteen? I don’t see him passing the second test..”

“Yeah, but it is still interesting to see what a teenager can do. He seemed like he knew what he was doing, if you aren’t blind. He even did better than you did on the first test!”

Everyone enthusiastically looked up as Ye Wei entered the cube. With smiles of excitement, they eagerly anticipated Ye Wei’s display.

“Are you ready?”

After Ye Wei nodded, Zuo Qiu Ming made a mysterious hand seal in front of his chest

“Zoom! Zoom!”

Zuo Qiu Ming’s small action activated the runes on the cube’s walls. The purple light started flowing as the runes started moving. Bolts of human shaped Qi together with the mirages fired at Ye Wei, filling his entire field of vision.

Ye Wei closed his eyes to rid unwanted distraction and confusion; his vision was not a useful tool when what he needed was to distinguish something could only be differentiated by his soul sensitivity. The moment he closed his eyes, his will-force came rushing out, picking up every little bit of Qi disturbances around him in great detail.

Under the penetrating scan of Ye Wei’s powerful soul sensitivity, he could easily tell the powerful Qi bolts from the hollow mirages. Now all he had to do was dodge the blanks while getting rid of the Qi bolts.

“Swoosh! Swoosh!”

Ye Wei's motion became nimble, swift, and flexible. Then the lights crashed towards him, his body, like falling leaves in a strong gust swayed left and right. He elegantly dodged the mirages within the tight space whilst his fingers empowered with runes accurately struck the Qi bolts.

The amount of mirages built up as time went by, and they were whizzing around Ye Wei at an accelerated speed. His soul sensitivity could keep up, but he soon realized there was just not enough space to avoid everything.

He therefore decided to analyze the macro movement of all oncoming bolts including the mirages, so he could strike a mirage as he calculated the optimal line of path.

Vigilantly watching Ye Wei's agile movements, the amused participants dropped their jaws and slowly became speechless.

"His soul sensitivity is phenomenal, one third of the incense stick is already burnt out, and he has only touched one mirage! I have only seen this tactic in returning participants." Zuo Qiu Ming mumbled, amused by the advanced level of combat intelligence.

'When I was sixteen, my soul sensitivity was not even this sharp! I have to make some connections to this kid when the exam is over...' Lu Feng thought as his eyes lit up in sheer excitement.

Although Lu Feng was confident about passing the exam, becoming a Runemaster, and getting accepted into the Lu family, he will still need to compete with other gifted youngsters in the family for the family's support. This would be impossible without a team of his own, and, needless to say, he was happy with what Ye Wei displayed during both tests.

"Only eight mirages, pass!" Zuo Qiu Ming exclaimed with a big smile as the incense burnt out. A shiver went down his spine, "Congratulations!" he said, nodding satisfiedly. Even in a state-setting, a teenager passing two rounds is a rare sight, one in a million, and Ye Wei actually just became the first person to do so in the Ning City branch.

"He passed!"

“This kid passed the second round!”

“I am envious of his talent, I feel like I have wasted my years training!”

Not one soul was calm when they saw Ye Wei confidently step out of the cube.

“I wonder what this kid’s background is like? Even though there is no family that can compare to my mom’s in this region, I just need to know!” Lu Feng mumbled to himself as he tried to figure out how to make his offer to Ye Wei as attractively enticing as possible.

Ye Wei exhaled deeply, grateful for his luck since getting hit by merely two more mirages would have made him fail, “I got this!” He clenched his fist while a heartfelt smile.

“Kid, if you wish to, I can refer you to the Ning City branch president so you can learn under him!” Zuo Qiu Ming sincerely said while looking at the incredible prodigy.

“Thank you for the thought, but I already have a master!” Ye Wei made a polite gesture and bowed.

“Of course you do! And I would like to meet him at some point!” Zuo Qiu Ming laughed, realizing this kind of talent must have developed by someone far greater than he could imagine.

Chapter 139: Creative

“Okay then! Next!” Pausing, Zuo Qiu Ming then focused his attention towards the participants.

A total of eleven candidates passed the first round. All nine of them who took the test after Ye Wei and Zhang Han performed well. Therefore, round two took more than an hour.

Only five out of eleven passed the second round in the end, including Ye Wei, and Lu Feng achieved the best result at six mirages.

Lu Feng’s talent intimidated Ye Wei. Although six years younger, he inwardly competed against him. Ye Wei couldn’t help compare himself with his nemesis.

Though Ye Wei expanded his knowledge on runes only years ago, his emotions blinded him from the fact that Lu Feng had began training and taught runic knowledge by Master Mu longer than Wei had even lived! There was no way he could outshine Lu Feng just yet.

“You may take an hour break before we start the third test – the final part of the exam.! Passing gains you a place in our union and the title Runemaster!” Zuo Qiu Ming looked at Ye Wei, Lu Feng and the other three who passed round two. He solemnly announced this only after the failed candidates had exited the side hall.

The third task was the most dreaded. All the previous effort would be wasted if they failed the third round. These were the reasons why Zuo Qiu Ming decided to give the candidate an hour to prepare for the most important part of the exam. Thus, in order for them to tackle the arduous finale he decided they should be in their best condition.

“Stance creation is not something I’d deem difficult.” Smiling arrogantly, Lu Feng muttered to himself while disdainfully glancing at the agitated faces around him.

His confidence originated from his experience of creating a mid-level Spirit stance in just twelve hours and knowing he only had to compose a

low-level Spirit stance.

“Creating a stance...” Ye Wei slowly took a few deep breaths. He appeared slightly anxious as he was on the verge of tackling a difficult challenge he had never faced before. Unlike the first two challenges that Master Yi touched on while training, stance creation depended on understanding and being in a creative process.

Ye Wei’s heightened senses heard what Lu Feng mumbled a few meters away, and thought ‘Lu Feng looks way too confident! I will have to pass this test too, I can’t stand still while he is just getting stronger and more influential...’ Ye Wei clenched his fist, haunted by the idea of Lu Feng possibly using his powers to overtake the Ye family again.

‘I have to use my time well, being upset does not allow me a better position to pass the last round.’ He stopped looking at Lu Feng, cleared his mind and began to use the Falling Star form to maximize his condition.

Apart from the two youngsters, the other three older candidates also had their eyes closed, optimizing their minds and bodies for the task ahead.

“I have been supervising this entry test for three years now, and I have seen more failing candidates than the stars in the sky, most of which failed in the third finale.” Zuo Qiu Ming murmured.

‘I kind of like today’s participants; I hope they’ll work something out. It’s tiring seeing people’s efforts wasted everyday! Especially the young ones, we haven’t had young blood entering the union for a while now...’ He sighed and thought to himself.

An hour quickly passed as the candidates focused on preparing themselves.

“This is it. If you pass this test, you will become dragons. All of you are aspiring Runemasters, you know how important this is!”

“My advice? Relax. Let your experience and intuition guide you through.”

“It’s okay. If you fail, do not despair. We have thousands of candidates enter every year, and only two or three get through. We’ve had years when nobody passed the entry exam, so do not despair if your fears come true.” Zuo Qiu Ming looked at the five potential Runemasters’ slightly nervous faces, speaking calmly.

“You have twenty-four hours to create a low-level Spirit stance. Furthermore, if you can create a mid-level Spirit stance, you will directly become a two-star Runemaster, creating a high-level Spirit stance will make you a three-star Runemaster!”

“Attitude is everything. It is normal to make mistakes, the most important thing is to learn from those mistakes and use them as a point of reference instead of them affecting your mood!”

Zuo Qiu Ming’s advice sounded loud and clear in the candidates’ ears. He made a few hand seals then three hundred and thirty-six shining runes appeared in front of him.

“These are the only runes you are allowed to use. As much as we would like, we can not learn every rune in the world. See this is your first lesson: using limited runes is what you need to be prepared to do. There will always be limitations when you create something!”

“You may begin now!” An hourglass appeared in Zuo Qiu Ming’s hand. He tipped it upside down as he spoke.

All five candidates without delay focused their attention, trying to remember all the runes they were given. Without knowing the runes, they would never be able to begin the test.

Zuo Qiu Ming waved his arm, summoning pillars of white light. Five pillars fell on each of the candidates, encapsulating them to ensure they couldn’t talk to each other, and they won’t be disturbed from occurrences in the hall.

“These are all basic runes...” Ye Wei sat himself in the lotus position; with his eyes closed, the three hundred and thirty-six runes appeared in his mind.

The energy flow and structure of runes can be similar, but they are never identical. Both runes positioning and sequence order are, therefore, very important for Runemasters. Their rune consonance will allow them to manipulate runes better than ordinary cultivators. Additionally, Runemaster's rune knowledge will give them better insights to each runes' structure and energy flow, and their soul sensitivity will allow them to actually feel the macro energy flow in the sequence as they try to put the runes together.

The fact that all five candidates were able to get this far proved that they excelled in these three categories. Their main challenge would find the creativity to construct these runes together in a unique working order.

Ideas come and go, Runemasters would travel distances just to have fresh points of view, to take themselves out of familiar surroundings to gain inspiration, and some even risked their lives by observing wild beasts' ways in close proximity. They empower their bodies to mimic, interpret and make stances out of what they saw from the world around them.

Another way for richer Runemasters to conceive innovative and new stances was to study rare runes that naturally grew on wild beasts' bones.

But in the sidehall, the candidates did not have access to any of those sources of inspiration. They would have to try and adjust their ideas from their errors. They would fail a hundred times to achieve that one successful time.

Stance creation was a lot about experience and practise, without either, Runemasters would not be able to make stances as they would struggle to know where they should start. That was precisely why Lu Feng and Zuo Qiu Ming did not see Ye Wei passing the exam at his age. He had no accumulation of experience regardless of the level of talent he displayed in the first two rounds.

Ye Wei remembered the three hundred and thirty-six runes rather effortlessly. He was familiar with the properties and style of each of the runes given, but he was stuck. His mind wandered, struggling to find a

starting point.

“Okay now what!?” Ye Wei grumbled to himself, “Why didn’t I try making something up when I had the time to...”

He had seen Master Yi struggle in creating stances and naturally knew that it was not a repeatable process. Sometimes Master Yi would suddenly stop in the middle of eating a meal. He would then go to the training room to finish or even start creating a stance.

Ye Wei scratched his head, dabbled for two hours trying to put runes together. Yet, even assembling five runes together had proven to be a challenge for Ye Wei. Without experience, he direly needed inspiration, or else he would never be able to start creating a stance. Only if his soul sensitivity was ten times stronger could he create a stance without accumulated experience, but Ye Wei didn’t have that either. This would make it possible for him to quickly and continuously reassemble the runes and discover which of the combinations were developable and which were not.

With Ye Wei’s current soul sensitivity, putting five runes together at a time was his limit, a far cry from thirty-six, which was the minimum amount of runes to make a low-level Spirit stance.

Ye Wei gazed upon the other candidates, apart from Lu Feng who was calmly and methodically putting runes together with his eyes closed, the older candidates were obviously struggling too.

It was no secret that Lu Feng came prepared. Master Mu briefed him. On the other hand, Master Yi did not give Ye Wei any information regarding the exam as he wanted Ye Wei to learn from improvising.

“No, I can’t let myself spiral!” Ye Wei bit his lips hard, intimidated by Lu Feng’s smug face and calm posture.

As time slowly passed by, Ye Wei became increasingly anxious.

‘Hahaha! Are you stuck kid?’ A demonic voice sounded in Ye Wei’s mind, the gloating laughter caused him to completely lose focus.

‘Not now! Shut up!’ Ye Wei felt extremely anxious. He feared that if Lu

Feng passed and he didn't, the Ye family would more than likely lose their ancestral land at North Hill Bay.

'Your temper reflects your age well. I was going to help you but never mind!' The Black Scale Progenitor's evil chuckle filled Ye Wei's mind.

'Help? From you? I am not five years old; you will need to be more creative if you want to trick me.' Ye Wei said coldly.

'What will I get from you? You are just a one-star condensed prime Warrior!' The Progenitor grunted, 'I, on the other hand, am just bored, and I kind of pity you. You have the Mystic Mountain, but you don't even know how to use it! Hahaha! It's so comical! Kid, the scale in your possession contains my energy. If you are able to infuse the energy flow within the scale, there is a chance you can create something strong as a Heaven stance.'

'It should be effortless for you to create a Spirit stance out of it, maybe a Myst stance if you are not completely stupid!' the Progenitor chuckled. He knew that if Ye Wei began to practice demon techniques, it would only be a matter of time before Ye Wei would become his puppet.

'Shut up, I will not fall for your traps and tricks!' Ye Wei frowned. Although desperate for help, he learned from his experience dealing with the Progenitor to act cautiously.

Half of the sand reached the bottom of the hourglass. Ye Wei became increasingly anxious as he struggled to put anything together. Large drops of sweat appeared on his forehead as he watched the grains of sand fall down.

"Done!" Lu Feng flicked his sleeves and slowly stood up.

The moment Lu Feng completed his stance, a soft pillar of light descended from the sky. All the pores on his skin loosened up and expanded. Because it was not his first time creating a mid-level Spirit stance, he did not receive a whole lot of comic energy; his cultivation only improved slightly from it.

"Mid-level Spirit stance, very nice!" Zuo Qiu Ming smiled while looking

at the stance in front of Lu Feng. He was satisfied being the supervisor who witnessed the first Runemaster to pass the entry exam this year.

He continued as he patted Lu Feng's shoulder, "when the exam is over, there will be a pilgrimage ceremony, after which, you may call yourself a two-star Runemaster!"

"Thank you!" Lu Feng's lips curled into a smile, ecstatic to become a part of the Lu family, 'I would love to see if Master Yi would dare to interfere in the Lu's business. It took me three years, but the land next to North Hill Bay is finally within my reach again!'

Opposite to Lu Feng, Ye Wei clenched his fist in the light pillar, his veins bulged as he saw his family's enemy finishing the challenge ahead of time.

'Haha! You only have twelve hours left kid. Time is running out on you!' The Progenitor's laugh resounded inside Ye Wei's head, the sinister laugh and offer was inescapable.

Chapter 140: High-Level Spirit Stance

‘The old dog must be trying to trick me again! Fool me once, shame on you; fool me twice, shame on me, and I will not let him make a fool out of me!’ Ye Wei arduously calculated on gaining the advantage of the situation without becoming the victim to the Progenitor’s schemes.

‘Kid, I have given you the chance. What you can learn from me is very powerful; so powerful, in fact, even prime Warriors would kill to learn my techniques. Just imagine, if you could create a Heaven stance!’ the Progenitor tried to sound calm and collected, so he wouldn’t raise Ye Wei’s suspicion.

‘Fine then, let’s cut the crap, and tell me what I should do!’ Ye Wei glared at the hourglass. Time was passing too fast. Desperately but deliberately, Ye Wei pulled the dark, glowing scale out of his bag.

‘That’s right, good decision! Being stubborn won’t do you any good! What is most important now is passing the exam not stressing out!’ The Progenitor persuasively replied.

‘Stamp this hand seal onto the scale. Once done, you will finally understand my power that I can offer. Although this will only give you a small portion, it will be good enough for you to at least compose a Earth stance out of the experience!’ the Progenitor explained He sent a mental image of a sequence of hand shapes directly into Ye Wei’s mind.

The complexity of the hand seals were too much for Ye Wei to understand right then. However, he still strangely replicated them as if he was guided by muscle memory.

Ye Wei felt a weird sensation similar to answering a question he didn’t even understand. As well, he couldn’t comprehend how the hand seals could cause him harm after briefly studying them. Not willing to waste any more time, he channeled his Qi and will-force. His hands became a blur as he quickly reproduced the hand seals and placed his hand onto the scale.

Suddenly an ancient present flooded his mind the moment his skin

touched the black scale.

“Bang! Bang!”

Ye Wei fell into a trance. No longer was he in control of his body or mind. Rather, he felt an existential experience, a separation of the mind from the body. He was floating in a borderless, expansive starry space; it took him some time to gain awareness of his surroundings. Finally, he recognized that he was on the back of a monster, which stretched over ten kilometers. They were being propelled through the indefinite distance by three pairs of large wings. Because they were travelling so quickly, he felt stationary while the universe around him was spinning. He could not logically reason out the environment around him; however, as he slowly looked at his transporter that was the least of his worries. The monster's body shone golden like the setting sun. Ye Wei could see its face as it rose its head, howling in the darkness surrounding it. Now, he could identify the creature which carried him. It was one of the legendary beasts – a sky wolf.

The beast noticed Ye Wei, and all of a sudden, Ye Wei was overwhelmed by its pressure. He felt an intense corruption of his mind.

The wolf vigorously struck its wings, exploding into a mysterious golden beam of light that extended infinitely.

Ye Wei was completely stunned, paralyzed. Sitting on the beast's back, he saw the infinite combination of runes in the trail of light that he became a part of.

Although demons are not capable of using stances, the stronger ones were able to channel the power in their blood exactly how cultivators use runes sequences to multiply the power within their blood. This transformation Ye Wei saw of the sky wolf was a demonic technique that had the power of a Heaven stance – Star Blink.

For Ye Wei would never learn this powerful technique that allowed its user to travel light years in the blink of an eye. It was almost inhumanly impossible; nevertheless, all Ye Wei needed was just a spark of inspiration and after seeing the sky wolf, his mind filled with ideas, inspiration that

could only be gained through experience or, for Ye Wei's case, a sky wolf.

‘Star Blink!’

‘Spindrift Steps!’

‘Star Shifter form!’

All these stances and forms, old and new, constantly flooded Ye Wei's head. The runes Zuo Qiu Ming showed the candidates began to come together, one hundred and twenty-eight runes began to form in Ye Wei's mind.

Those one hundred and twenty-eight runes floated back and forth, slowly assembling together.

Wary of the sinister effect it may bring, the Progenitor's plot, Ye Wei did not reproduce, but, instead, he used the principal of its energy flow to link the puzzle pieces in his head together.

While Ye Wei was processing the rush and quantity of information, Zuo Qiu Ming was lamenting. Pacing in the hall and inspecting the four remaining candidates, he reasonably thought that Lu Feng would be the only person passing the exam today.

Four hours, two hours...

The remaining twelve hours would soon be over, and Zuo Qiu Ming became more and more certain no one else would pass..

At the exact moment the last grain of sand was dropping in the hourglass, a milky white pillar of energy dropped down and devoured Ye Wei.

“This is cosmic energy!” Zuo Qiu Ming stared at the hefty pillar with widened, disbelieving eyes. His face displayed an undisguised expression of shock.

“High-level Spirit stance!”

Zuo Qiu Ming easily discerned that the amount of cosmic energy, which descended was vastly superior to Lu Feng's stance.

“How is this possible!?” Lu Feng stared, amazed at this teenager who sat inside the cosmic energy pillar. Of course, he enviously frowned, shocked that someone, especially someone so young, had out beat him. ‘How can a sixteen year old create a high-level Spirit stance in a day!?’ it’s f**king impossible!’

Lu Feng was completely startled. He just could not believe his eyes. This scenario was so improbable, for a second, he thought he was hallucinating. He never heard of anyone of this age managing to create any stance at all; and, now, he just witnessed a teenager passing the Runemaster entry exam by creating a high-level Spirit stance.

“Hahaha! I have actually lived and was the protector the day an unbelievable genius passed the exam!” Zuo Qiu Ming was lost in a mixture of emotions, so strong he started to laugh hysterically.

“He actually just created a high-level Spirit stance...” Lu Feng was still struggling to believe what he saw, but Zuo Qiu Ming’s hysterical laughter confirmed that he was not hallucinating. A sixteen-year-old boy just created a high-level Spirit stance from only basic runes, passing the remainder of the Runemaster union entrance exam to become the youngest Runemaster ever recorded in the history of Qing state.

The previous record holder was Ke Bai. He managed to pass the entrance exam at the age of eighteen. Now, when Ye Wei just surpassed him, he had the position of Runemaster Union’s Qing state regional president and also the only one-star Grand-Runemaster in the state.

Being a Grand-Runemaster meant that Ke Bai influenced those who lived all across the Zhou dynasty’s land and even the royals who sometimes consulted him when it came to strategic matters of the dynasty’s security.

Ye Wei just broke the Grand-Runemaster’s old record. Familiar with the big names and legacies in the Runemaster Union, Zuo Qiu Ming saw what just had happened in front of his eyes, a miracle. He could no longer contain himself.

“I will report this to the president as soon as possible, so that they can

notify the head quarters. This kind of news is too big just to be included in the regular reports!”

“What happened today doesn’t guarantee him being equal in power to President Ke, but it certainly places him in the Seven New Runes!” Zuo Qiu Ming excitedly looked at Ye Wei, amused by his new discover, the groundbreaking young genius and thinking how this could bring the union to its new height.

Like the God’s Seven, the Seven New Runes represented the seven best young talent of the state, but, unlike God’s Seven, the Runes specifically refer to youngsters with runic talents.

As Runemasters are rare among cultivators, the Seven New Rune title is even more prestigious than the one Ye Wei gained a couple days ago.

As the last grain of sand in the hourglass fell, the entry exam ended. Ye Wei had absorbed all the cosmic energy surrounding him.

‘Two-stars condensed prime!’

Ye wei opened his eyes, clenched his fist, and felt a burst of energy coming out of the newly formed golden crack on the silver Qi ball in his dantian.

The amount of cosmic energy Ye Wei acquired greatly exceeded what he’ve gotten so far from refining stances. Not only did he break through, his Sentient was also upgraded to yellow grade.

During the past three-year training under Master Yi, Ye Wei’s Sentient transformed to orange grade and now under the nourishment of the vast cosmic energy his Sentient underwent another transformation.

‘This speed enhancement stance is based on the dog’s Star Blink, and translated to a stance using the runic principals that constructed Spindrift Steps and Star Shifter form, let’s call it Starblink Steps haha!’ Thought Ye Wei. Although it was just a high-level Spirit stance, it was inspired by a Heaven stance and had great potential to be refined.

Ye Wei thought the perfect form of this stance could well be either an Earth or a Sky stance.

“Although Starblink Steps is only a high-level Spirit stance, I believe I will be able to match the speed of a cultivator two levels above me...” Ye Wei murmured to himself as he reviewed his proud creation.

‘Humm, I incorporated the Qi flow of Star Shifter form for its energy sustain, but I think Starblink Steps could actually help me deflect attacks due to its smooth and slippery Qi flow!’ Ye Wei activated the stance. He felt unrestrained by gravity. Weightless, each small step Ye Wei took him farther than was possible before, via a slight arced path.

‘Why didn’t you just learn my Star Blink technique!?’ The Progenitor’s screamed, echoing in Ye Wei’s Sentient, ‘you foolish insolent brat!’

‘The Star Blink technique is as strong as a Heaven stance! Using only its minimal potential would be the same as performing a Myst stance. It was created by me and therefore not recorded in any human archive! You could have claimed this greatness and made yourself famous!’

‘It’s not hard to translate my technique into those three hundred and thirty-six runes...’

‘Your pathetic creation stinks like a hundred of mounds of horse shit! The stench insults me! Plagiarizing brat!’ The Progenitor was furious., Ye Wei was not as foolish as he believed or wanted him to be. If only Ye Wei would have mimicked his technique, the demonic energy would flow in Ye Wei’s body and resonate with the Progenitor’s presence, allowing the demon ancestor to take control. Yet, Ye Wei maneuvered precisely out of the jackal demon’s scheme.

The Progenitor became furious as his second attempt to conquer Ye Wei also failed; he could not believe he was outsmarted by a being less than ten thousandth his age.

‘Old dog, there is no point being mad. I will be taking precautions every step I take and with every decision I make. I am young but I am not naive unlike you!’

‘I have been warned, and I am protected. You should just stay quiet before I either get rid of you or make use of you!’ Taunting the Progenitor, Ye Wei attempted to enrage the old demon, so he could have some peace.

Chapter 141: Rites of Righteousness

The Progenitor's plot failing actually benefited Ye Wei more than it harmed him. 'Oh well, your loss...' The old demon appeared calm but was actually furious within because his plan completely backfired.

The last grain of sand stopped rolling, settling at the bottom half of the hourglass. Time seemed to have frozen as the Progenitor and Ye Wei's consciousness communicated.

"The exam is over! Congratulations to you two! After the ceremony, you will officially be a part of our union." Zuo Qiu Ming announced loud and clear as he scanned across the five candidates. His eyes lit up with appreciation when they fell onto Ye Wei.

"You will become a two-star Runemaster and a three-star Runemaster respectively according to the level of the stances you two have created!"

"May I add that I am especially proud to be the examiner today. It was my luck that I got to see the making of not one, but two young talents with my own eyes!" Zuo Qiu Ming decided it was appropriate to openly express his fondness as the exam had finished.

Ye Wei and Lu Feng did not just end the dry spell, they finished with style, breaking many records! Lu Feng being one of the quickest ever to finish the stance creation challenge, and Ye Wei being the youngest candidate to pass the exam in the whole of Qing state much less creating a high-level Spirit stance. Any Runemaster Union member, or official, could only dream of witnessing the birth of such a talent.

"Congratulations young ones; you two surprised me!"

"I am fortunate to have taken part in this exam, and I know your names will echo through the ages!" All three of the elderly cultivators who failed the test were content with their failure and paid respect to whom they were both jealous of and admired.

Rather than feeling remorse, they'd rather try to seek inspiration from these talented youngsters so they too could one day reach their goal of

becoming a Runemaster; something they had tried to achieve for half their lives.

“Thank you for the kind gesture.” Ye Wei bowed and said humbly.

Lu Feng could see that every in the side hall were more impressed by Ye Wei than by him. This caused his face to turn ashen as he heard the flattering words directed towards Ye Wei. He was supposed to become the youngest Runemaster in Qing state, and in fact, he was still one of the ten youngest Runemasters in the region, but his flair was now completely drowned out because of Ye Wei’s existence.

Being the prideful youngster, he was Lu Feng was extremely displeased that someone six years his junior, a mere teenager, was able to outshine him on something he took great pride in. Apart from that, his plan to recruit Ye Wei was not likely as Ye Wei would soon be under the spotlight as the newest and greatest rising talent. Having a three-star Runemaster with a moldable young mind on their side would be a dream come true for many powerful organizations.

All these negative thoughts came crashing into Lu Feng’s mind.

Zuo Qiu Ming looked down at the recommendation letters, and rose his head and smiled. “Today we have two new Runemasters who both came from Green Moon City! Congratulations to Lu Feng and Ye Wei!”

Zuo Qiu Ming read Ye Wei’s letter of recommendation again and frowned. He knew that Master Yi was a ten-star Runemaster who relocated to Green Moon City from the capital, but even so, it did not quite explain the level of rune mastery Ye Wei displayed.

“Ye Wei!?” Lu Feng’s eyes widened and a chill went down his spine.

Ye Wei realized immediately that Lu Feng now knew exactly who he was and their eyes crossed full of hostility.

‘I should have realized if anyone was be able to produce an apprentice of this caliber in this region, it would be Master Yi...’ The puzzle pieces came together in Lu Feng’s head. ‘My men told me that Master Yi’s apprentice had a red Sentient.... How can trash like that grow so strong so

quickly!? It's only been three years!'

Ye Wei knew the time would come when Lu Feng figure out who he was, therefore, he was able to keep his cool. Now because of his three-star Runemaster status, Ye Wei was no longer scared but confident.

'Your move...' Thought Ye Wei while staring at Lu Feng.

"Okay, now may I ask the candidates who failed the exam to leave the hall?" Zuo Qiu Ming said politely while he briefly looked at Lu Feng before his appreciative gaze was once again set on Ye Wei.

It became more and more apparent that even the supposedly neutral official was becoming fond of Ye Wei.

"You should both know how important the ritual is, correct?" Zuo Qiu Ming kindly looked at Ye Wei and said in a serious tone.

"Yeah!" Ye Wei nodded. Master Yi had explained to him in the past the importance of the ritual.

No matter how strong one's will-force was, how high one's rune consonance, or how sharp one's soul sensitivity nobody was born a Runemaster.

Only through the ritual could one's Sentient be imbued by the Combat Master. The holy presence of the Combat master affects one's will-force and transforms a Runemasters' will-force into a more effective tool to use against humanity's enemies; the demons and wild beasts.

Due to their natural body strength demons and wild beasts were born stronger than human beings, and this allowed them to easily defeat humans on the same level as them, and sometimes even ones with higher cultivation. But this ritual allowed Runemasters to be excluded from this pattern. After the ritual Runemasters could easily beat demons and beast of the same cultivation and posed a threat to counterparts with higher cultivation all because of the holy presence in their Sentient.

After passing the Runemaster entrance exams, the candidates were to be guided through the ritual during which their will-force would actually be guided by the Combat Master and flow in the shape of the holy

conservatory.

The conservatory was built by the Combat Master himself following runic principles. Those principles were translated to runic patterns which were essentially where the power of the holy presence came from, and this was precisely what demons and beasts were weak against.

The stronger a Runemasters became, the more their will-force follow the conservatory's flow pattern, ultimately making their will-force many times more effective against demons and beasts. This is the reason why Runemasters were seen as assets of mankind.

"Remember, you need to stay pious and pure during the ritual having clouded mind is very dangerous!" Zuo Qiu Ming looked at Ye Wei and Lu Feng and said solemnly.

"Sacred statue!" Zuo Qiu Ming grunted as he summoned the Combat Master's image again.

Knowing the importance of the ritual, Lu Feng shook his head to put the grudge out of his mind. He switched his attention from Ye Wei to the statue; his mind became clear and pure.

Ye Wei took a deep breath to relax and turned his face towards the statue.

"The Heavens are in plain sight, their righteousness boundless..." Zuo Qiu Ming began to recite the passages left by the Sages while Ye Wei and Lu Feng followed.

While the spoken words echoed the hall, the statue began to emit waves of rippling energy that rushed into Ye Wei and Lu Feng's Sentients transforming their will-force.

"Bang! Bang! Bang!"

Their invisible will-force were drawn out by statue's energy and began to take physical form. Their will-force took the shape of mysterious and magnificent structures accompanied by a series of awe-inspiring bell tolls.

The images of spectral buildings were clearer above Ye Wei's head than they were above Lu Feng due to the difference between their runic capabilities.

'Little one!' When Ye Wei's will-force completed the outline of all seventy-two buildings of the conservatory, a familiar, powerful presence visited his Sentient again and a deep voice sounded.

'Your Grace!' Ye Wei greeted as the middle-aged scholar's figure became clear.

'I knew you were special but I did not expect to meet again so soon! Now I am sure you will become someone important, therefore, I have a special gift for you...' The Combat Master said with a smile while lifting his finger. Pressing it to Ye Wei's forehead, a mark that resembled a golden lotus appeared between Ye Wei's eyebrows.

'Little one, keep cultivating and training hard!' The Combat Master's voice began to fade as if the source of the sound was moving further away from Ye Wei.

'A gift?' Ye Wei blinked quickly confused as the image in his Sentient disappeared without any more explanation about the mark. 'I know the Combat Master won't lie to me but I honestly don't feel any different...'

Ye Wei could not feel the mark and its color faded, melting into his skin without a trace.

The Combat Master had ways to make anything host his consciousness, objects, man, beasts, and even demons. If it was not for the black scale, his consciousness would have never actively gone into Ye Wei's Sentient; he would almost never pay any Runemasters a visit like he did with Ye Wei.

It was both by chance and destiny that Ye Wei bonded with the Combat Master, and it was Ye Wei's fortune to have received two gifts from one of the founding Sages.

"Finished!" Zou Qiu Ming grunted as the energy around the statue disappeared. Both Ye Wei and Lu Feng had their will-force enchanted and

they were now Runemasters!

Chapter 142: Runic Badge

After the ritual's ending, Zuo Qiu Ming allotted Ye Wei and Lu Feng each a badge.

"Finally, I am a Runemaster..." Ye Wei tightly grasped the badge, whispered to himself ecstatically.

When Green Moon City learned that Ye Wei had become a Runemaster, the three biggest martial families, and the City Lord now realized how much respect was due to Ye Wei. Upon meeting him, they would have to bow, and anything else required to honor a Runemaster.

"Ye Wei, do you have time to talk?"

Zuo Qiu Ming patted Ye Wei's shoulder; he welcomed the newly qualified Runemaster with a soft, amicable smile. He desired to speak about the Seven New Runes.

If Ye decided to enlist as a part of the Seven New Runes, authorities in the whole Qing state would have to treat him decorously. As well, he would be bestowed with countless privileges. These incentives were very persuasive, and Ye Wei didn't even need any encouragement from Mister Zuo.

"Mister Zuo, you don't even have to ask, I will gratefully oblige!" Ye Wei elatedly smiled as he replied and nodded politely. Then thought to himself, 'you, an official from the Runemaster Union's Ning City branch, clearly want to befriend me... Why would I say no?'

"Hahaha! Little boy, you surely present yourself well! Follow me to the second floor please." Zuo Qiu Ming led Ye Wei out of the side hall towards the staircase. Lu Feng was completely forgotten about; they even left without acknowledging him by not saying goodbye.

Zuo Qiu Ming had sensed the change between Ye Wei and Lu Feng. He understood with Ye Wei being a Runemaster and at the same standing as Lu Feng, the equanimity between them before was erased, now they were enemies. Nonetheless, he instantly chose to affiliate himself with Ye Wei.

Lu Feng was good, but not extraordinary; this young boy would one day become an influential figure.

Lu Feng stood all alone in the grand but empty hall. As Ye Wei and Zuo Qiu Ming walked away, his eyes vengefully glared at them. Hate was growing in his heart; revenge was brewing. For now, Lu Feng could only grudgeful glare at the new superstar, his new enemy.

“Very well, Ye Wei, just you wait!” Lu Feng’s hand trembled. He squeezed the badge tightly as his eyes widened. He flicked his sleeve, impatiently turned, and angrily strode out, each step echoing in the vastness with no one to hear them.

Zuo Qiu Ming led Ye Wei into an elegant sitting room upstairs and sat down.

“So, Ye Wei, it seems you and Lu Feng don’t get along well, am I correct?” Zuo Qiu Ming poured Ye Wei a cup of tea while casually questioning him.

“Yes, you are right.” Ye Wei acknowledged. He thought about Lu Feng’s scheme three years ago, and how he pulled some strings, used the Du family, a general who worked for the City Lord, and a merchant guild’s president to attempt taking over the Ye family’s land. ‘He would have killed us all if it wasn’t for Master Yi...’

“Lu Feng and his master Mu Kun are people you shouldn’t worry about.” Zuo Qiu Ming frowned as he saw Ye Wei growing agitated, but he continued in a wary tone, “however his mother is from a big family, who have influence all across Qing state. I think he came to take the entrance exam mainly for recognition from his mother’s family. Now, that he is a two-star Runemaster, I am pretty sure he will have no problem getting approved and will soon become a part of the Lu family.”

“On the other hand, if the Lu family does not like you then you might be in trouble. They are one of the four biggest martial families in Qing state. Furthermore, multiple returned prime Warriors minister them. Most important, though, they are related to one of the royal families. This is the worst part.” Zuo Qiu Ming looked at Ye Wei and tried to sound as

collected as he could, “my advice for you, boy, is to avoid direct conflict with him. Don’t give him and them any reasons to start fights with your family. You have limitless potential; but, only when you have reached a certain status, which is made from connections, then can you sort out your dispute with him! This is my advice for you Ye Wei; I hope you will heed it.”

Working as an official in the Ning City branch had broadened Zuo Qiu Ming’s understanding on the political games the influential and powerful played to get what they wanted. Idealism had no chance in the cut-throat arena of the royals. Zuo Qiu Ming told his opinions as a whole without leaving out any details. He truly hoped the best for Ye Wei and wanted him to do well, but as well remain good.

“Thank you for your sincere advice, Zuo Qiu Ming. I appreciate your kindness.” Ye Wei recognized Zuo Qiu Ming’s sympathetic intentions, and he nodded gratefully.

‘So, for now, I don’t have to worry about Lu Feng, as long as I don’t cross the Lu family, they wouldn’t be so trusting to support their new addition yet...’ although now a three-star Runemaster, Ye Wei humbly understood he was not ready to take on the Lu’s.

“That’s not all I wanted to say. If you are listed as one of the Seven New Runes, even the Lu family won’t be able to touch you!” Zuo Qiu Ming mirthfully smiled, switching the topic to what he truly wanted to speak about.

“Qing State’s Seven New Runes?!” Master Yi had mentioned about them before. So, Ye Wei knew what Zuo Qiu Ming was talking about.

Every state was responsible for protecting their young talents within the sovereignty. The God’s Seven and the Seven New Runes were much more than just titles; they were created so the state and the Runemaster Union could send forces to where the fourteen youngsters were located to keep an eye on them. Humanity could not afford to lose any talented future leaders.

Not only do the God’s Seven and the Seven New Runes protect the

youngsters from demons and beasts, if any man threatens both groups of seven, in any way, the offenders will be punished and their whole family killed.

“With your talent, definitely the Seven New Runes will enlist you without any problem!” Zuo Qiu Ming chuckled, “the regional president, strong as he is, passed the entrance exam at the age of eighteen, and you at the age sixteen. By far, you broke his record! If we can’t put you, a sixteen year old three-star Runemaster, on the list I don’t think anyone would deserve to be on it.”

“Are you sure?” Ye Wei felt relief, realizing he might not even have to worry about the Lu’s.

“Of course!” Zuo Qiu Ming earnestly stated. He wanted to reassure Ye Wei, “just fill in the form here; I will make sure the president sends your application to the headquarter as soon as possible. That way we will quickly obtain the result. It will take up to a month for the finalization of the paperwork. In the end, the headquarter will have to send the information to the holy conservatory and the Runemaster board always has something to process...”

“Understood.” Ye Wei grabbed hold of the form Zuo Qiu Ming gave him. He immediately filled it out.

“I will notify the regional president so that he will send the form out immediately. Meanwhile, please take a look at the runic badge.” Zuo Qiu Ming said while looking.

Ye Wei’s mind wandered as he watched Zuo Qiu Ming leave the room, ‘I hope it will turn out okay! Grandpa worked very hard rebuilding the family after what happened three years ago,’ the Ye family grounded and stabilized Ye Wei like a root. He was willing to do anything to make sure its safety.

“Runic badge?” Ye Wei lowered his head, looking at the badge made of mysterious material. The badge represented a Runemaster’s status, and the three stars on it meant that Ye Wei was a three-star Runemaster.

The holy conservatory made the runic badges. Their magic superseded

what ordinary cultivators could understand; however, Ye Wei had seen this object before in the hands of Master Yi.

Ye Wei lifted his finger, channeled his will-force, and gently placed his finger onto the badge. A mysterious mist burst out and became a hologram of a young woman.

The young woman wore a white silk dress, wrapped in ribbons. Ye Wei almost mistook her for a fairy. Her beautiful facial features, slim figure, and the way she levitated in the air all resembled the tiny elfish creature.

“Dear Runemaster Ye Wei, hello! I bid you welcome to the Runemaster Union!” The hologram said smiling. An air of surprise shortly followed. ‘He looks young! And, already he’s a Runemaster! Impressive!’

Runemasters’ information were sent to the conservatory and confirmed during the ritual process. Moreover, it contained the top will-force signature recognition security system, allowing nobody else than only areal Runemaster to use the badge.

“Master Ye, since this is your first time using the runic badge, let me introduce you to its diverse functions.”

“First off, the amount of contribution tokens you have is registered here. You exchange the tokens for mystic arms, stances, formulas, pills and herbs. Apart from those, you can also buy blank scrolls, demon blood, demon bones, runic carriages and other rare goods. You may also buy intel and apply to use the Union’s army with this device.”

“You can get anything you need as a Runemaster from this channel if you have enough tokens. Once your order has been placed, we will ensure your order is delivered to you within twenty-four hours as long as you are on this planet,” the hologram continued.

“If you have problems or questions regarding runes and cultivation, for a price, you may list them on the jade walls where they can be answered by other union members. For a higher price, you can hire other Runemasters and even Grand-Runemasters to guide you!”

“I need to add that there are rank requirements to some of the

purchases. For example, if you would like to use a squad of the union's forces, you will have to be a ten-star Runemaster as well as having a hundred thousand tokens in your account."

Ye Wei had seen the badge glued to Master Yi's hands in the past, but never had he paid attention to what his master did with the device. The girl's voice was soft and clear, which helped Ye Wei pay attention to the important information.

"There are many ways to earn contribution tokens, and I will go through the three most effective methods with you right now!"

"Method one, answer the questions listed on the jade walls which you can have access to through the device in your hand, you will be paid a reward if the information you submitted was useful."

"Method two, submit stances you refined and created. If you are willing to contribute to the Union's archive, the Union will pay you a handsome price for your refined stances and your creations, considering you don't mind them being published at some point."

"Lastly, method three, hunt wild beasts and demons. The union sells processed demon blood, beast bones, and skins..." the hologram explained to Ye Wei the information on how he should prepare the materials, and how they should be packed before he should send them to the Union.

Although the introduction was long, the shocking functions of the badge kept Ye Wei entertained.

"...and the badge can read who you are because unlike normal cultivators, Runemasters' will-force carries a different Soul Presence that is how we identify, locate, and allow our members to talk to one another using the badge."

Ye Wei's was stunned. He browsed the Union's inventory and slowly realized why all cultivators secretly wanted to become a Runemaster. A Runemaster's position was not just the valorous duty of protecting humanity at the frontline; it also represented the rewards of such risk. The riches one could be rewarded was unprecedented.

“Runemasters cultivate, and for a Runemaster, there is nothing more important than stances and physical weapons. Specifically their Soul Weapons. They are not normal weapons nor are they mystic arms, but instead, self-customized weapons that can carry runes and stances created by yourself.”

“Mystic arms are powerful; however, they are set. They have no space for improvement and refinement Runemasters should always use the advantage of your mastery on runes and make yourself a soul weapon!”

“The information within the badge is broad and wide. We have a list of free volumes on runic information that all of our members can access. If you wish to dig deeper, you can spend some tokens to gain archive access.”

Chapter 143: Sky Stance, Zodiac Sword

The recently required information broadened Ye Wei's horizons; he started to think about concepts and ideas regarding cultivation as he had never imagined before.

"Master Ye, the conservatory has a tradition of giving newly-titled Runemasters a random stance. This traditional lottery is their reward for passing the entry exam!" The sweet, enthusiastic voice said.

That's how Master Yi learned his healing stance, the Green Mizzle...'

The stances gifted to new Runemasters did not guarantee to be high-grade stances, but they were always rare stances. The Green Mizzle given to Master Yi was only a low-level Myst stance; nonetheless, if he ever decided to sell it at the black market, it would fetch a high-level Myst stance's price.

"When Master Yi was accepted into the union, he was randomly given a very practical stance. I hope I will get something functional as well." Ye Wei's face shone with glimpses of hope and expectation.

Even though the stance distribution was randomized, the conservatory selected stances according to each Runemaster's will-force properties.

"Master Ye, will you do the lottery now?" the hologram asked with a friendly smile.

"Lottery? Oh, for the stance! Yes, of course!" Ye Wei took a deep breath and collected himself.

"Okay!" the hologram nodded and waved her hand. The badge Ye Wei held loudly shook and projected a fortune wheel in the air. It divided into different sections, and each of the sections had a rune carved on it.

The silvery wheel was shrouded in a thin mist. In the wheel's center visibly shown a golden pointer.

"Let's begin!"

The wheel spun on its own; no one touched it. Concurrently with the

wheel, the golden lotus mark on Ye Wei's forehead started glowing.

“Swoosh!”

The wheel rapidly spun; there was no use to estimate what rune one would receive. Amidst the blurriness of the wheel itself, the only visible feature was the golden pointer, and Ye Wei could not take his eyes off the golden pointer for a second.

“Ding!”

A crisp, alerting sound echoed the room as the wheel stopped spinning. The sharp end of the pointer halted at a small line of letters.

“Sky stance – Zodiac Sword. Volume one.”

When Ye Wei and the hologram read the chosen small golden letters, they both went silent, indicating their bewilderment and confusion.

‘A Sky stance!? How can that be?’

The holographic girl covered her mouth while Ye Wei widened his eyes. He could hardly breathe, and she could barely understand. For centuries, a Sky stance has not surfaced in the whole Zhou dynasty.

Ye Wei imagined Sky stances were just legendary, fictional anything but real. When Pu Yuan told him that Supernova stances could evolve into one, he thought Pu Yuan just exaggerated and Sky stances didn't exist anymore.

“I... I...” Ye Wei was stupefied. He tried to comprehend what kind of power this newly acquired stance might possess.

“Can that be a Sky stance? I have never seen any Sky stances coming out of the lottery until now!” The hologram froze from the shock of this miraculous event; she felt reality was tricking her, playing with her logical mind. Realizing she was embarrassing herself, she shook her head, decided to accept this illogical inconsistency, and congratulated Master Ye. She kept staring at Ye Wei, imagining what kind of luck this young boy had as there were only three Sky stances out of billion stances Ye Wei could have won.

“The first volume of Zodiac Sword... How many volumes are there in total?” Ye Wei asked, exhaling heavily at his supernatural luck.

“This volume can be bought by contribution tokens. You can look for yourself,” she waved her hand, and a hologram of a large jade wall appeared out of nowhere, with an extensive list of stance names and prices written on it.

From top to bottom it said,

; grade: Sky stance, number of volumes: twelve, cost: three hundred billion tokens.

; grade: Sky stance, number of volumes: eleven, cost: one hundred and eighty billion tokens.

; grade: Sky stance, number of volumes: ten, cost: one hundred and twenty billion tokens.

; grade: Earth stance, number of volumes: seven, cost: one hundred billion tokens.

; grade: Earth stance, number of volumes: seven, cost: eighty-eight billion tokens.

Ye Wei just stared at the presented list; he couldn't believe the stance he had just won through complete chance was the most valuable one on the long list.

“Volume one cost how much!?” He asked himself, seeing the volume he recently acquired cost ten million tokens. Briefly, he thought how insane that amount was comparing with his master, a ten-star Runemaster, who only had a few hundred thousand tokens.

Suddenly, Ye Wei remembered the gift the Combat Master vouchsafed to him, making him wonder how random was the lottery.

“Master Ye, would you derive the stance now?” the girl requested softly while Ye Wei contemplated this phenomenal gain. Upon buying or acquiring stances, they would be transferred directly into a Runemaster's mind. The process of collected stances could not be visibly perceived.

“Absolutely! Derive, please!” Ye Wei assented without hesitation. The desire to explore the potentials and possibilities of the rare Zodiac Sword stance was overpowering him.

The badge in Ye Wei’s hand vibrated slightly; a vast wave of ideas transmitted to his badge from the expansive emptiness of space, directly flooding Ye Wei’s consciousness.

Although Ye Wei amassed only the first volume of the stance, the amount of information was massive. More than Ye Wei imagined or prepared for; it took over an hour until Ye Wei received the entire content of volume one.

“Master Ye, once again, I congratulate you for becoming a part of the union! If you need anything else in the future, you can use this badge to directly summon me,” bowing, the girl’s image blurred and eventually faded.

“It’s a shame, I can’t decipher this stance yet...” Ye Wei tightly clenched the badge and shook his head regretfully. He had discovered the minimum level to practice the stance was five-star condensed prime Warrior level.

Being just a two-star condensed prime Warrior, Ye Wei had a long way to go until he could utilize his new stance. Nevertheless, if he decided to use the Supernova stance, he could be able to try to learn the Sky stance’s basic, foundation. However, this would only be temporarily.

‘Humph, idiot! It’s only a Sky stance. On the other hand, I had offered you something much more powerful. Why would you even bother with something so weak?’ the Progenitor read and disrupted Ye Wei’s mind once again, ‘Now, don’t you think the Combat Master was a bit stingy, wasn’t he? He was obviously hiding other good stances for himself instead of sharing them with you.’

‘If you are trying to instigate something against the Combat Master, I will not sit here and do nothing! You old hound, I know exactly what you were scheming against me. Remember, I am young, but not a naive fool. Anything as powerful as Heaven stances are based on the creator’s’

cultivation experience and understanding. If I had tried learning your technique, surely, there would have been some awful consequences on myself, right?' Ye Wei grunted and ignored the Progenitor. He kept himself occupied by browsing messages, tips left behind by other Runemasters, and checking the prices of scrolls, mystic arms and other useful cultivation tools.

Surprisingly, Ye Wei discovered something familiar on the list of formulas:

; grade: unknown, available volumes: vol. Two, five and seven, cost: (chap. two) three hundred billion tokens, (chap. five) eight hundred billion tokens, (chap. seven) one hundred billion tokens.

Ye Wei could not believe it. The formula that inspired the creation of the Supernova stance was listed. He reflected on how lucky he was to have given the first chapter by inheriting the Glacial Emperor's legacy.

'Even the Runemaster Union only collected three chapters...hmmm... what is the story behind these volumes?' Ye Wei decided to buy the second chapter from the union as soon as he earned enough tokens.

"Oh yeah, I wonder how many tokens the demon blood in my bag is worth!" Ye Wei expressed, hoping to gain more wealth soon. He followed the instructions given by the hologram:

Low-rank demon general blood – reward: five tokens.

"What?! I nearly lost my life for that!" Ye Wei was stunned, His expectations dissipated and he felt deflated, realizing how far away he was from his goal. He understood now why even Master Yi only had a few hundred thousand tokens to his account. "How many decades do I have to live if I wanted to get that Sky stance through my own means..."

"Ye Wei!"

Zuo Qiu Ming's voice abruptly sounded when Ye Wei continued browsing the goods through his device.

"Yes sir, I'm here!" Ye Wei quickly stood up, replying unexpectedly.

Chapter 144: Sonic Runes

“Ye Wei!”

Zuo Qiu Ming smiled brightly as he strode over to the new Runemaster. The sound of his crisp, joyful laughter echoed throughout the room.

“Mister Zuo.” Ye Wei happily bowed. Influenced by Zuo Qiu Ming’s laugh, he also smiled widely, safely assuming his application had been approved.

“Congratulations kid, your papers went through and the Qing state office already approved it!” Zuo Qiu Ming felt his words did not fully express his excitement, he applauded Ye Wei with a heavy slap on the shoulder, “Hahaha! Finally! Our branch has given birth to a New Rune!”

After getting approval from the Qing state office, it was quite certain Ye Wei would be listed after the standard procedures.

“Thank you so much Mister Zuo for your help!” Ye Wei politely gestured and bowed, relieved that his family was now more or less protected from Lu Feng’s possible schemes.

Under the pressure of the union, even if Lu Feng had the Lu family behind him, he could not risk his whole family being punished.

“Little man you are too nice; I am an official here at the union, and I am only doing my duty. The fact that a new talent, such as yourself, came out of this branch is something I should be proud of. If you don’t mind, just call me brother Zuo. Mister Zuo this, Mister Zuo that just sounds weird!” Zuo Qiu Ming casually smiled and looked at Ye Wei.

“Sure! If that is okay with you, brother Zuo!” Ye Wei smiled.

“Hahaha! You’re being too modest again. If it’s comfortable with you, just call me that!” Zuo Qiu Ming was not purposefully befriending Ye Wei to be obsequious. Once the news of Ye Wei becoming a Seven New Runes spreads, the whole state will know about it, ensuing requests of dubious friendships and uncertain alliances.

Ye Wei stayed in the elegant room; he wanted to chat with Zuo Qiu

Ming more and not just about business. He found out more personal information including Ye Wei's master as Zuo expressed a heartfelt admiration of Master Yi's from stories of the master's youth.

Although Ye Wei saw his master, day in and day out for three years of training, the master's past seldom became a subject they spoke about.

'So master is not a native of Green Moon City...' Ye Wei began to discover how little he knew.

Thirty years ago, Master Yi passed his union entry exam in the capital, and during the same year he became a ten-star Runemaster, shocking the whole capital. That was one of the reason why Zuo Qiu Ming and other experienced Runemasters knew about Master Yi's past.

"He was a ten-star Runemaster thirty years ago!? Then why is he still on the same level...?" Ye Wei asked himself, confused but hesitant to ask out loud.

Zuo Qiu Ming looked at the badge in Ye Wei's hand and smiled, "this badge you are holding can save you life. Apart from trading goods and tokens, if you are in the field attacked by demons, wild beasts, you can inject your will-force into it and activate a distress signal function. Once it's been activated, it will notify all Runemasters within two hundred kilometers, so they could come to your rescue. Of course it goes both ways."

'I must take care of it and keep it safe!' thought Ye Wei. Even though the badge requires a Runemaster's will-force for activation, it would still be troublesome if it fell into someone else's hands.

"Additionally, news and messages from the region's branch and the main headquarter will update everyday. You can find this information also on your device. That's the primary way union branches communicate with each other. For example, the news of your passing at sixteen-years of age has already spread. It's reasonable to conclude Master Yi has learned of your position as a three-star Runemaster now. Furthermore, when you officially become a part of the Seven New Runes, all union members will recognize your name!" Zuo Qiu Ming smiled and said, "from now on, if

you meet a Runemaster, you can just tell them your name. They will know who you are and probably help you with whatever problems you may have. They may even assume you are an object of protection. Now with the questions on the jade walls it's every man for himself!"

"Can the runic badge receive messages from the Runemaster Union?" Ye Wei was dumbfounded, but he regained his reason 'if the badge can relay voice messages and holograms from the headquarter far way, receiving messages from the union should not be a difficult thing.'

"Apart from textual messages, five-star Grand-Runemasters and above can send and receive visual images. Yet, only a few people in the Zhou dynasty are capable of doing so. Normally, this is only done with drastic occurrences. Occasionally we can also receive images from demon emperors!"

"Can do what?" Ye Wei asked appalled.

"Well, you see, the Combat Master designed the badge long ago. It is packed with very powerful runes and runs on the surrounding primal energy. Some demon emperors accidentally learned how the routing worked. Thus from time to time, they will harass us. However, you don't have to worry about that. They are strong but usually do not do anything more than just taunt. Of course, we will know instantly if anything bad happens." Zuo Qiu Ming patiently explained.

"Thank you for explaining all the details! Brother Zuo!" Ye Wei smiled and made a polite hand gesture.

"Haha! You are being modest again!" Zuo Qiu Ming laughed, appreciated Ye Wei's humility and became even more fond of the young Runemaster.

After everything that had occurred, Ye Wei stayed in a guest room in the Ning City Runemaster branch, studied the runic badge and researched into rules and guidelines of the union.

Within in the next two days, he saw the most expensive things available to buy and the cheapest; thankfully, the cheapest items only costed single digit tokens, actually manageable to obtain.

“Security?” One of the columns on the catalog caught Ye Wei’s attention.

The Runemaster Union recruited powerful cultivators from different dynasties everyday, and union members could hire them as followers with contribution tokens.

“Hmmm, hiring a five-star condensed prime Warrior would take more than thirty thousand tokens!” Ye Wei exclaimed in his thoughts, thinking that it was actually a reasonable price. If he had enough tokens, he could even hire a god’s prime Warrior. However, hiring a returned prime Warrior would cost a few hundred thousand to millions of contribution tokens. Ye Wei finally decided this was not something he should waste his time looking into right now.

‘If we can get a few returned prime Warriors to look over the family mansion, even the Lu family wouldn’t be able to touch us,’ Ye Wei sighed, he wished he had more tokens to spend.

Besides mercenaries, Ye Wei was also interested in soul weapons. They were unenchanted weapons made of high quality materials. Every time Runemasters mastered a new stance, they would engrave the respective simplified rune sequence onto their soul weapons. These weapons would eventually become stronger, more suitable for their owners as they were exposed to each Runemaster’s unique will-force and Qi.

Soul weapons’ power will fade after their owners’ death., making them unable to be passed down.. Although they were high quality weapons, their prices were often less than the cost of mystic arms.

Ordinary soul weapons were made of thunder-gold, costing a few hundred tokens each. But the superior models made of emperor-jade, ancestor-gold and other more valuable materials could cost up to a few million tokens. The real value of soul weapons was their customizability; the stronger the weapon owner became the more powerful the blades and spears of the weapon would become.

Seeing all these treasures available, Ye Wei desired them, his inability to buy the sound quality weapons annoyed and upset. He didn’t want the

items he could afford only the ones he couldn't.

Ye Wei t began planning how he could quickly earn contribution tokens. He recalled what the hologram told him that the quickest and painless way to acquire tokens was to answer the listed questions.

He decided to turn his desires into reality. Activating the badge, he was immediately surrounded by a large wave of primal energy from the device as runes burst out.

Questions appeared in Ye Wei's head.

"Are these all questions on the jade walls?" Ye Wei found many of the questions relatively easy to answer even though he was rewarded relatively low, only two tokens per question. Nevertheless, in a short time he gained around five contribution tokens..

'It's way quicker to earn tokens this way than to hunt demons!' He concluded remembering how close to death he was while fighting the black mist clan demon.

What Ye Wei didn't realize was that the demon general he fought was only that powerful because of the black scale. Otherwise, Ye Wei would have no problem hunting twenty demons of that level.

So, he just browsed and answered question after question. The further he read, the more difficult they became, and the more tokens they paid out. Although Ye Wei could answer a lot of the questions, he dared not to answer the more difficult ones as he was not quite experienced enough.

"This is the fifty-third wall, and each of these questions rewards more than ten thousand tokens! But, none can be answered with only simple answers. I need more experience and practical understanding if I want to efficiently earn more tokens!"

"My knowledge is actually very underdeveloped..." Ye Wei acknowledged. Slightly discouraged. Although the Mystic Mount's presence in his Sentient provided him with a lot of answers and runic knowledge, he began to realize that a lot of them were not answerable until he had experience practicing them in reality.

Ye Wei went through another thirty questions only to discover they were all related to the applicational aspects of runes. He realized he would be better off answering the easier questions to slowly accumulate more tokens.

Just when he was returning to the questions before, a short, simple question grabbed his attention.

“What is this straightforward question doing here?!” The question related to specialized rune rewards to whoever could answer correctly. “How is this unanswered!?” Ye Wei double checked the wording just to make sure he was not imagining things:

“How is the thirty-second of the thirty-six runes from the Sonic Rune Set constructed?”

‘How can the answer to this question be worth two-hundred thousand tokens!?’ Ye Wei thought excitedly; all the other questions on the same section of the jade wall discussed how runes should be assembled with each other in order to maximize their power in combat and in stance creation setting.

He channeled his will-force and drew forth the rune in the question. Since there were over a billion rune shapes in Ye Wei’s head, answering a basic question like this was rather effortless for him.

—

Over a million miles away in the reign of Sacred Snow dynasty, three Grand-Runemasters sat around a table on the summit of a mountain, drinking and chatting.

“The Sacred Snow dynasty just keeps becoming stronger and stronger! We already have a hundred thousand passing the entry exam this year!” Said Yang Shuo. Being the union’s president in his dynasty, Yang Shuo often checked the figures to see how well the country was doing just in case he needed to strategize a plan.

“I have heard! It is a great pleasure to be working beside you and seeing how well our branch is doing!” The two Grand-Runemasters smiled and

nodded.

Abruptly, all three of them were alarmed by a sudden surge of Qi disturbance coming from Yang Shuo's runic badge, "Oh! I think someone must have answered one of my jade wall questions!" he said surprisingly.

"Oh no, who was unlucky enough to pick one of your annoying questions!? Haha!"

Yang Shuo lifted his head, took out the device, and frowned. He quickly stood up, shocked, " guys, you need to see this!"

Chapter 145: Jian Chen

“What is it?” one of the Grand-Runemasters asked, seeing a buoyant smile on Yang Shuo’s face, “could it be the question regarding the specialized runes?”

“Yes!” Yang Shuo nodded heavily. As he was reading the answer his voice broke from pure excitement, “all thirty-six runes in the Sonic Rune Set are very powerful, but the set has been extinct since centuries ago. Recently, there has been a project to rediscover them. Thirty-five of them were recovered by Grand-Runemasters, but the thirty-second rune of the set is still nowhere to be found. I think that rune holds the key to me being able to create the Sonic Lion Roar stance. The stance I have been working on for years!”

All the sources on the Sonic Rune Set the Grand Runemasters have read mention the elusive thirty-second rune. None of the Grand Runemasters could find, so they eventually gave up, ending the project prematurely.

“This is it! It finally makes sense!” Yang Shuo excitedly screamed after carefully inspected the rune Ye Wei drew just moments ago. He could imagine the rune’s similarities and continuity with the rest of the set.

Yang Shuo’s heart ecstatically raced. He couldn’t believe, after all, this time, the hardest of the three questions listed on the wall had been answered. Especially, the one answer he desperately needed to be answered but did not expect, let alone, be answered correctly. He was more than happy to pay out the two-hundred thousand tokens for him this was no problem.

“Ha! Maybe I should get in contact with this person... Wait, what!? He’s sixteen years old? And he’s a three-star Runemaster!?” His eyes bulged at the knowledge a sixteen-year-old three-star Runemaster answered his unanswerable question. Since he was the president of a branch, he could check the identity of individual members.

“A teenager!?” The other two Grand-Runemasters dropped their jaws, exchanging a look of shock amongst themselves, “maybe he just got lucky

and found the rune in his family's library.”

“This genius of a kid is called Ye Wei. He passed with flying colors. So, I can see here... He didn't just randomly stumble upon the fifty-third wall. Instead, he answered a few questions before this one. Usually only Grand-Runemasters will browse this far, but still, I don't think luck played a part in this,” Yang Zhuo said. Clearly, he was interested in Ye Wei and trying to deduce from the information he had, “I always thought Zhou dynasty was weak in comparison to us!”

Yang Zhuo memorized the young Runemaster's name, hoping he would meet Ye Wei one day.

Basking in blissful joy for earning two hundred thousand contribution tokens, Ye Wei was completely clueless to how much he impressed a president of a powerful monarchy. Although he was still unable to afford everything that caught his eyes earlier on, the amount was very much impressive. The amount motivated Ye Wei to save up for the most expensive items in the catalog instead of spending the tokens on something more affordable but less useful.

“I will pause now and take a break from answering questions... Wait, I have been here for two days, I should return now!” Ye Wei exclaimed, realizing how effortlessly he passed the time.

After bidding farewell to Zuo Qiu Ming, Ye Wei left the union branch and ran towards the Galaxy Academy. He remembered that South Star was scheduled to face Zhoutian Sword School today. As well, he knew for a fact if he was not present, South Star would not stand a chance.

Though Jian Chen was not yet a God's Seven, it didn't mean he was not as strong as one. He just hadn't faced any of the seven yet; therefore, he didn't have a chance to claim the title officially.

Arriving at the meeting between the two schools, Ye Wei felt an immense Qi disturbance in Jian Chen's body. Jian Chen's Qi level could easily equal that of Shi Hun Tian's Qi at full strength.

This was why Ye Wei looked forward to fighting with Jian Chen. After fighting three powerful opponents, he had learned a few new stances,

improved in cultivation, and could not wait to use his new techniques in combat.

While Ye Wei was running to the tournament venue, contestants from all the thirty-six schools were vigorously competing with each other.

On platform two, Jian Chen of Zhoutian Sword School was wearing his simple white robe, as usual, standing in the middle of the amethyst platform, smiling at the South Star camp.

“Excuse me by any chance, would any of you know where brother Ye is and when will he be here?” The tournament had already started an hour ago, and a lot of matches were even ending soon, but Jian Chen refused to start fighting.

Jian Chen had yet to see Ye Wei, and the rest of South Star was too weak to fight him. He was not willing to sabotage the good relationship between Zhoutian Sword School and South Star. He knew he could effortlessly destroy all of South Star’s, so effortlessly, in fact, that would disgrace and embarrass himself. He would be more of a bully than a respectable fighter.

The understanding was also mutual; Liu Jian, Chen Mo and the rest of South Star were patiently waiting for their ace to show up.

“If I win without defeating brother Ye, it would be unfair. Don’t be offended, please. I mean no disrespect at all, and I am happy to wait,” Jian Chen had been looking forward to this fight ever since he saw Ye Wei’s performance. He did not see the point of fighting with South Star if he wasn’t able to fight Ye Wei.

The tournament was halfway over. There were only four teams that had not drop one match: Galaxy Academy, South Star Academy, Seven Star School, and Zhoutian Sword School.

“We’ve seen Jian Chen fighting every day for more than two weeks. We know how strong he is; there is no point for South Star to fight without Ye Wei present.”

“Do you think Ye Wei is scared of losing his title? Maybe that’s why

he's not showing up!"

"I don't think so. You see, cultivators of that caliber take great pride in their cultivation. They are extremely competitive and will not cowardly skip a fight! We can just watch Galaxy fighting Seven Star before Ye Wei shows up. I want to watch last year's champions ending Seven Star's winning streak!"

The young cultivators around platform two were all curious and started to get impatient.

Meanwhile, on the cloud platform, the influential people were looking at each other, confused and frustrated.

"I have not seen Ye Wei for two days now." The Green Army generals looked displeased and unimpressed because of Ye Wei's absence.

"Generals, I recently heard some news from the Runemaster Union. Two days ago, two cultivators just passed the entry exam and became Runemasters here in Ning City," the City Lord stated calmly to the military personal.

"So, what has that got to do with anything?" one of the generals disdainfully replied back. The general despised talking about the Runemaster Union since the army often found themselves competing with the union recruiting new blood.

"Well...actually, it has everything to do with the South Star fight, one of those two youngsters who passed the exam is called Ye Wei, coincidentally," the City Lord continued, grinning.

"Coincidentally? You mean..." the Green Army generals narrowed their eyes and looked at each other; they understood what the City Lord implied.

Their conversation was interrupted by the noisy crowd below.

"How could this be!?"

"How did all three of them lose?"

"The three strongest cultivators from Galaxy Academy just lost to a

nobody from the Seven Star School!”

“The fights took no time at all! What’s the kid’s name from Seven Star again?”

The whole crowd went wild as three of the God’s Seven were defeated within such a short time frame.

“I asked myself the same question, but that kid defeated them way too fast! I guess those three from Galaxy could not see his moves either! No wonder, they couldn’t defend themselves properly!”

The ending result was entirely unexpected. Even the audience watching high up in the clouds did not foresee the outcome. They looked down at the dark skinned Tu Fu Sheng. The dark horse’s moves were too fast for the young ones; however, the influential people saw Tu Fu Sheng’s power. They understood that such agility and strength came from a cultivation level over a five-star condensed prime.

Unfortunately for the trio of Galaxy Academy who were by no means weak, they faced an opponent that significantly outclassed them.

Nonetheless, both young and old were impressed by such a fight; whereas, the City Lord and the generals of the Green Army realized they were looking at a youngster who would be able to rank high even in state-stage.

Tu Fu Sheng slowly stopped after sorely beating his opponents, “Now, how did you three become God’s Seven, again?” Tu Fu Sheng chuckled, looking at his badly defeated opponents from afar.

The defeated top three cultivators felt humiliated, resentment and bewilderment shown on their faces. None of them imagined themselves losing to this upstart, a newcomer with no past. It was not just his speed they could not match; it was also his strange fighting style that they could not have prepared for despite all their hard work.

“I will admit you fought well, but we will beat you next time,” Feng Yi said calmly, even in defeat. He then led his teammates away from the amethyst platform.

Tu Fu Sheng looked towards platform two, right into Jian Chen's eyes. Both their gaze intensified as they realized they were looking at each other. Moments after, he jumped down the platform and exited with swagger.

Platform two remained quiet while crowds elsewhere screamed at the teams who were finishing their fight.

Chen Mo decided to break the silence, "brother Jian, we appreciate your gesture, but we shouldn't make you wait any longer, let's..."

He was interrupted by the screaming of his schoolmates.

"He's back!"

Joe Yin, Cao Ning screamed, and the rest of South Star cheered. Looking towards the entrance, they saw a young man in green robe; his energy condensed into two feathered wings which flapped as he quickly headed towards platform two.

"About time!" vice-principal Xu impatiently and excitedly looked at the young man coming.

"Brother Ye, are you okay? After such a long wait, I started to worry about you!" a heartfelt smile appeared on Jian Chen's chiseled face. He stood straight to show respect, greeted Ye Wei, and grabbed his beloved sword.

Though Jian Chen appeared cold and insensitive, in actuality, he was caring and understanding, maybe too much so, and he just didn't know how adequately to express his emotions without seeming weak.

Like Jian Chen, Ye Wei did not think about winning or losing; instead, he just wanted a good, competitive fight where he could learn from his opponent.

The crowd became louder since this match would decide the second team that remained undefeated and possibly crown a new God's Seven.

Chapter 146: Zhoutian Sword Notion

Ye Wei and Jian Chen, smirking and standing in silence, faced one another on opposite ends of the circular platform, anticipating the formidable battle about to take place.

Their presence rose and expanded as the anticipation grew in themselves and their audience.

Jian Chen stood still, allowing his Qi profile to increase. His razor sharp Qi rose towards the heavens, the only place which allowed such a bone-chilling breeze. As the Qi wrapped around the platform and filled the arena, the onlookers shivered, thinking winter had come.

In Ye Wei's eyes there flickered a flash of fear. He discovered his opponents sword was made of runes. This meant Jian Chen's Qi was powerful enough to keep the integrity of his runes for an extended period.

Ye Wei emboldened his Sentient, sending a rush of thick, immense will-force throughout his body. He lifted his right hand and wrote a long sequence of runes spraying a mercury-like texture in the air, mingling with Chen's icy Qi.

"Brother Ye, I just want to let you know, I respect you greatly, but I will fight you with everything I have, my respect will not make me weak!" There was an air of determination on Jian Chen's childish face. He slowly pointed his sword to the ground at a blunt angle; it sent waves of rippling runes in all directions.

"It's Zhoutian Sword Notion!" The audience on the clouds quickly recognized Jian Chen's technique.

Zhoutian Sword Notion was Jian Shi Yu's signature move and defining attack. The technique imitated the positioning of three-hundred and sixty-five of the brightest stars in the sky all centered around the sun. It contained an infinite amount of possible routes. No one could be certain of the attack's direction and without certainty it almost impossible to defend against and escape unthinkable.

“It’s amazing he learned this technique at such a young age. I can envision a bright future ahead of him already!” the City Lord exclaimed; he could not help but to admire young Jian Chen’s achievement.

“The newcomers this year are incredible!” The cloud’s higher ups cheered and conjectured like they were the school kids again.

Not every year did they see three young cultivators taking out God’s Seven as was done earlier. Moreover, it was even a rarer sight seeing all three aces of Galaxy Academy being taken out.

“Admirable young ones indeed! We will be replaced by them very soon from the looks of it...”

“We should rejoice that mankind is producing such talented new blood!”

“Well, that is a good way to perceive it!!”

Simultaneously, Tu Fu Sheng examined platform two from a distance, his lips slightly curled up. His eyes flashed green but immediately faded before anyone caught a glimpse.

“Huh, you guys think you’re so tough. Well! I will watch to see which one of you is more worthy to fight me!” Sheng thought but did not say, only his face revealed the jealousy in his heart.

Exposed to Jian Chen’s mysterious energy, Ye Wei felt gravity left him floating in the expansiveness of space with the stars.

“The Zhoutian Sword Notion is a conceptional stance. Meaning, it allows Jian Chen to materialize the weapons he constructs in his mind. Anything you mentally visualize will appear in reality, so I’ll be fighting you in two arenas, one mentally and one physically...” Ye Wei’s eyes lit up. Instead of fearing this unknown battle tactic, he welcomed the new imposing danger with an open mind, letting himself be inspired by Jian Chen.

‘Falling Star form!’

Ye Wei channeled his energy; the runes in his palms transformed and grew into three sharp runic swords: one red, one blue, and one purple

blade.

This technique, Selenic Triple-Primal Sword, was what Ye Wei learned after breaking through to a condensed prime Warrior. Although appearance-wise the two methods differed, Ye Wei's technique's runic structure was similar to his opponent's. Jian Chen's mentor, Jian Shi Yu observed the similarity. He narrowed his eyes and asked curiously to Xu He who stood next to him, "Who is this kid's mentor... Could it be Gu Qing?"

"No," vice-principal Xu replied, shook his head, "He is Master Yi's legacy apprentice!"

"Oh?! Master Yi's apprentice? I understand now..." Jian Shi Yu nodded, "How else can this kid be so strong yet still so young... Gu Qing is too stiff to mentor such a flexible young cultivator. Mimicking one's opponent would be the last lesson principal Gu would teach his apprentices. I wonder, was he taught to use the sword or did he naturally chose the sword? Nonetheless, all of it is impressive."

Xu He smiled but inwardly felt bitterness towards Jian Shi Yu and his ruthless critique, wondering if his boss should know.

Jian Chen's loud grunt captured everyone's attention, "Brother Ye, are you ready?" He stared straight t at Ye Wei; his direct gaze briefly cast his opponent in a trace while the rune array near Jian Chen twinkled and spun around like an astral storm. Zodiac signs were integrated together, becoming runic blades.

A silent pause and then a hail-like noise filled the air; the thousand runic blades like galactic ice n furiously stormed down upon Ye Wei.

The fearsome Qi blades crackled and broke on the platform, fracturing and marked it with a web of cracks resembling a giant spider web.

Ye Wei's gaze focused on his opponent. His three selenic swords expanded, each becoming thirty meters long. Particularly, the red one became a long blazing fire spear which he shot towards Jian Chen.

The fire engulfed the air making the fire grow thicker and wider. The

impact of Ye Wei's attack weighed the platform down too much causing the amethyst block to break into two halves.

“Bang! Bang!”

The two stance collided in mid-air, breaking the amethyst platform into even smaller debris.

Of course, the matchup of two gifted cultivators was assumed to be intense, fearsome, and destructive. Nevertheless, the fracturing of the solid stone was incomprehensible to the audience. Everyone was stunned to see the devastation occurring just from the beginning of the match.

Apart from the City Lord, everyone sitting on the cloud platform was high-level condensed prime Warriors. However, the two teenagers' amount of destruction frightened yet awed the elite fighters.

On the destroyed platform, the raging Qi swords rampaged and whizzed everywhere. After waves and waves of their Qi's crushing force, the two teenagers were fighting on a bed of sharp stones instead of a smooth surface.

“This is way too powerful!” Ye Wei looked in Jian Chen's direction; their eyes met.

The starlight in Jian Chen's pupils iridescently brightened. The Zodiac Blades' presence enhanced as they became one with his Qi. It looked as if Jian Chen was becoming a sharp-edged weapon himself! He mentally envisioned himself into reality.

The growing sharp presence applied significant pressure on Ye Wei.

‘Supernova first evolution!’

Ye Wei grunted as his Qi presence steeply exploded, empowered, and enlarged the Selenic Triple-Primal Sword stance, allowing the runes engraved on his bones to shine like the sun. He was absorbing Jian Chen's Zhoutian Sword Notion.

The Glacial Emperor created the Selenic Triple Primal Sword stance. The stance infused three different kinds of energy and the Emperor's

Supreme Sword Notation. Thus, Ye Wei's technique took advantage of Jian Chen's rune array, absorbing the bursting energy and strengthening itself.

The selenic primal swords flashed before Ye Wei's dark eyes. He was studying the movements and patterns of the sword and would soon mimic them.

Although it was not a high-grade stance, the stance contained infinite unknown sword strikes based on the Glacial Emperor's swordsman experience.

The Supernova evolution's effect boosted Ye Wei's cultivation power three times higher.

"What is going on?!" Jian Chen discerningly frowned. He could feel his sword notion being slowly absorbed by Ye Wei's selenic swords. Additionally, he noticed Ye Wei's cultivation exploding into a four-star condensed prime level.

'So, this is his real strength?' Jian Chen felt threatened as Ye Wei's Qi fell onto him like a rising tide, 'Bloodmoon Tri-Eye stance!' He grunted from the strain of the massive energy levels require to create a new-moon-shaped third eye. This eye appeared on his forehead while three bolts of sharp, transparent Qi sped towards Ye Wei.

Ye Wei startingly felt the density change in the Sword Notation.

"Fine then, Let's go!" Ye Wei shouted.

A majestic force wave emerged from the fusion of Ye Wei's three selenic swords. The wave came rushing towards Jian Chen at an incredible speed.

Jian Chen's stance penetrated Ye Wei's Qi swords at lightning speed; nonetheless, its initial momentum was slowed down by Ye Wei's solid and powerful stance, the fight slowly developed to just a battle of swords.

'Even if I lose, my sword mustn't!' Jian Chen looked fiercely determined. He began to continuously inject Qi into his Bloodmoon Tri-Eye stance, stubbornly trying to dismantle Ye Wei's threat.

“Break!” Ye Wei’s eyes glowed hysterical as he screamed.

“Boom! Boom!”

All three of Jian Chen’s newly formed runic swords imploded and swiftly disappeared; they were incinerated by Ye Wei’s blazing sword. The selenic swords then absorbed Jian Chen’s energy, gathering an unstoppable momentum.

“It’s been broken?” A flash of confusion and disappointment appeared in Jian Chen’s eyes. He did not expect Ye Wei to beat him at his own game. The average audience was unable to see the epic battle of their runic powers under all the dust stirred up from the epic clash of energy swords.

However, Jian Shi Yu, City Lord Chen Yuan, and a few other powerful cultivators could discern the great advantage Ye Wei had due to his strange stance, from what they could understand, he turned Jian Chen’s swords hostile to their user.

Technically, it was a Machiavellian maneuver to turn opponents’ stances against themselves almost akin to cheating; the technique remained acceptable because Ye Wei was essentially empowering his stance.

Since the tournament began, Ye Wei had displayed an astounding ability to grow and adapt quickly: from learning Qi Xiu’s Starshifter form, to using Jian Chen’s sword notion, the City Lord was shocked by Ye Wei’s speed and his ability to observe and copy.

Ye Wei was like a dry sponge, soaking all the energy, stances, and forms he fought against in his quest to become stronger.

Without Jian Chen’s stance infused with his own, Ye Wei’s Selenic Triple-Primal Sword was just an advanced mid-level Myst stance; but, with the sword notion, it became as dominant as forbidden-level.

Feeling the sharp edges of Ye Wei’s stance, Jian Chen stumbled and leaped backward as Ye Wei’s three selenic swords merged into one and dug a deep scar onto the mountain top.

Jian Chen dodged the incoming attack as fast as he could; however, Ye Wei eventually pushed him to the edge without him realizing it.

Ye Wei did not appear exhausted after this extraordinary energy display. Instead, he felt energetic and alive. His runes and stance were shining even brighter, burning even hotter than the beginning of the match.

Staring admirably at Ye Wei, Jian Chen showed his respect with a slight nod and a soft gaze.

“Like I told you earlier Ye Wei, I will use all my strength against you as a token of respect, please do the same so that we can learn from each other!” Jian Chen said solemnly. Then the moon-shaped third eye on his forehead shone brightly while a pale-red, circular ball of energy slowly formulated.

The whole mountain top was painted red.

The silenced audience felt like time had stopped flowing, haunted by the stillness and suffocation.

“What eerie stance is this?! It is an impressive moon-shaped globe of energy!”

“Scary!”

None of the youngsters around could ignore the presence that was now crushing them physically; they all pitied Ye Wei as they could imagine what kind of power he will soon have to confront.

Chapter 147: Half Bloodmoon

Assassination Sword

“Bang! Bang! Bang!”

Wave after wave of force rippled and burst from Jian Chen like a tsunami with each wave becoming stronger than the last.

As the ball of moon-shaped energy became larger its redness became more vivid and shone brighter.

“The bloodmoon behind him was filled with aggression. What kind of stance is this?” Ye Wei thought, startled from this unknown but impressive stance. A shiver went down his spine as he felt like a leaf floating in the middle of the ocean during a storm and that he could be crushed at any moment.

Although Ye Wei was under the effect of Supernova stance, his strength that was comparable to a four-star condensed prime Warrior did not make him feel any safer while confronting Jian Chen’s stance.

Ye Wei was struggling, and on the verge of being brought down to his knees; his bones began to crack, and the runes on his bones circulated at an accelerated speed.

‘Supernova stance, second evolution!’

Ye Wei screamed in pain as the energy in his body condensed further, before Jian Chen released the immense surge at the bloodmoon.

Jian Chen felt the aggressive, rampaging surge of energy and looked concerned. He could never have imagined that Ye Wei was capable of matching the power of his best stance. He slowly lifted the sword up causing the bloodmoon behind him began to rotate.

The two different colored dark and pale energies expanded and contracted in a cycle. Jian Chen’s stance resembled the various phases of the moon from full to gibbous, to crescent, then to new moon and back again.

The pulsing moon cycles shocked and impressed the audience high up in the sky.

“It’s that stance! I never would have thought!”

“He is capable of using this stance... That is incredible! Jian Shi Yu is full of surprises, and I am sure he has created a monster!” The lively speculation went on.

Even the City Lord joined in and became uncharacteristically chatty.

Xu He’s face expressed a sense of wariness. He anxiously looked at Jian Shi Yu, “Principal Jian, please make sure Jian Chen doesn’t become too reckless, he can kill Ye Wei!”

Jian Shi Yu smiled, and replied with a gentle tone, “Relax Xu He, Jian Chen knows where to draw the line”

‘Relax!? What do you mean relax?!’ Xu He turned his head back towards the martial platform. His legs shook from just looking at the bloodmoon and feeling its pressure. He nervous for Ye Wei..

Meanwhile, Ye Wei’s Qi still expanded while his Supernova stance second evolution was reaching its peak. The condensed Qi rushed into his limbs, creating a shrill, cracking sound.

‘Ha, you think you can beat that stance just with Qi? You will need to do more than that if you want to survive! You will drop dead once he has finished channeling the stance!’ The Progenitor suddenly commented, chuckling.

‘Shut up you!’ Ye Wei grunted, secretly acknowledging the truth in the Progenitor’s statement. He looked steadily at the bloodmoon, and he could feel a fearsome presence hidden deep within the flowing, pulsing energy.

‘I will show you the way this one time. This stance is called Skywheel Bloodmoon. You can easily defend against yourself against by activating your Qi and use these runes!’ the demon projected a few shapes in Ye Wei’s mind. His mesmerizing voice echoed in Ye Wei’s mind.

Jian Chen pointed his sword towards the sun, “Brother Ye, careful now,

this is Blood moon Assassination Sword. The Sword Master during his prime created it. Though it was an unfinished creation, it is so powerful I cannot even fully control it.”

The Progenitor was dumbfounded, ‘God damn it! The stupidity of humans shocks me; Are you humans really this stupid? You two are opponents. Why in the hell would you tip each other on what stance you will use?!’

‘Well, you are so knowledgeable why does it even matter? It took you no time at all to figure out what stance he was using.’ Ye Wei sarcastically replied.

‘Pfft, if you keep up that attitude than I don’t care! It’s you who will be demolished by the Sword Master’s stance.’ The Progenitor was becoming irritated.

‘Blood Moon Assassination Sword?’ Ye Wei narrowed his eyes.

Ye Wei’s Sentient flashed golden. Jian Chen’s stance suddenly slowed down and the runes became clear. The young Runemaster could now see the mystical ways the blood moon was constructed.

“So this sword stance is simply an extension of the other stance he used earlier!” Ye Wei stated. He stared right at Jian Chen’s stance to analyze its structure.

Ye Wei’s eyes lit up, ‘The flying wheel covers the sky, the blood moon floats then it sinks, where it starts is where it ends!’ Ye Wei finally comprehended Jian Chen’s stance’s power cycle from the mild new moon phase to the power surge of the full moon phase.

‘Only full moons can be nicked, the rounder an object is, the more stress its surface, the high one gets the faster one falls!’ Ye Wei grunted. His body filled with condensed Qi to a point he overflowed with power. It bursted out in every direction, thickening the air around the martial platforms.

While most of the spectating crowd thought Ye Wei’s chance to beat Jian Chen’s stance would be at the blood moon’s dimmest phase, Ye Wei

avored the opposite.

‘Six, seven, eight-star condensed prime Warrior level.’ As every rune on Ye Wei’s bone glowed golden. The rune circulation strengthened his cultivation from a two-star condensed prime warrior to almost a peak eight-star level warrior.

His Qi burst like a river, but as the Qi fell into his hands it became swords, using them to fall upon his foe simultaneously.

Exactly what Ye Wei calculated, the rune structure of Jian Chen’s stance maxed out Jian Chen’s power when the blood moon was at its largest. The red moon shape slowly shrunk as some of the bonds between runes were broken by Selenic Triple-Primal Sword.

The timing of Ye Wei’s strike was perfect.

Ye Wei’s Qi crushed the blood moon’s structure, causing its spherical shape to fall apart.

The Progenitor watched everything that had just occurred inside Ye Wei’s head. He was stunned; he couldn’t imagine Ye Wei still concealed aces up his sleeves and how perfect the counter strike’s timing was.

The Supernova’s stance in second evolution phase granted Ye Wei the power of an eight-star condensed prime Warrior. Jian Chen was lucky to know how to use the Sword Master’s stance, or he would not have stood a chance.

Jian Chen represents the summit of Qing state when it came to cultivation. The sage’s stance he learned contained power which even exceeded Myst stances. This stance allowed him an edge over most other young cultivators in the region.

However, Jian Chen’s cultivation was too low; as a result, he could not use the Sword Master’s unfinished stance to its fullest potential. If a returned prime Warrior used the same stance, he could defeat anyone at the same cultivation level. And this was only an unfinished stance, a person who would finish or complete would be able to found their own clan.

After the blood moon disintegrated, the crowd was rendered silent. No one dared to even breathe because of such shock and anticipation of what was next to come. could be heard as everyone held their breath in shock.

“How could that burst of energy be so powerful?! I wouldn’t dare to think the blood moon could be defeated by anyone lesser than a returned prime Warrior! He didn’t use a scroll right?” The youngsters all came up with their own speculations.

“Eight-star condensed prime cultivation! How... How is that possible!? The audience high up were not only impressed but concerned as well from Ye Wei’s display of power.

“He is just sixteen! I have never seen anyone like that in Ning City... No, actually, I have never seen someone this young as strong as this in the whole of Zhou dynasty.

“Now, that is a powerful amplification stance!” The City Lord stared at Ye Wei’s back while murmuring, “Yi Yan... What did you feed this young monster!”

City Lord Chen Yuan ruled thirty-six cities in the region. He could gain any information he desired on any person that caught his eye. In fact, he had his men investigate Ye Wei after he saw the fight between South Star and Polaris on day one.

This was how he knew Ye Wei was Master Yi’s apprentice, and Ye Wei was from an old martial family in Green Moon City. It was already unbelievable enough for the City Lord to believe that the Runemaster’s apprentice became a Runemaster. Now, he did not know what to think about the teen’s eight-star condensed prime Warrior cultivation level.

“So, you were able to push your cultivation through the eight-star condensed prime level, huh? I highly doubt you can use this technique more than once though. Nevertheless, this is getting interesting!” Tu Fu Sheng’s pupils dilated, impressed by this threatening power.

While Tu Fu Sheng was visually analyzing Ye Wei, nobody dared to disturb his personal space. He was giving off an intense aura. The alluring girl near him was nowhere to be found.

“Wow, Jian Chen just lost. Truly, Master Yi’s apprentice is quite something. Just like his mentor, he defies human logic!” Jian Shi Yu disdainfully shook his head while looking at the dispersing blood moon.

In Jian Shi Yu’s eyes, he had no way to calculate that Ye Wei was actually able to channel the power of a eight-star condensed prime Warrior. Moreover, figuring out the weak spot of a sage’s stance and countering after just a brief look was not expected by Jian Shi Yu at all.

Xu He’s jaw dropped as he looked at Ye Wei’s graceful posture, “this kid is not to be underestimated!” He exclaimed after clearing the thoughts in his head, surprised by the unimaginable talent of Master Yi’s legacy apprentice.

Although he did not realize Ye Wei was that powerful, he was now getting used to Ye Wei surprising him.

“I surrender!” Jian Chen was startled and astonished. He could not but help staring at the place his vanished blood moon had been. Embarrassed by defeat, his face was completely red, but his eyes shone a light of determination. He muttered to himself, ‘It is my own fault. Ever since I was toddler, I have been learning this stance, and still after a decade I have not completed it. I must thank brother Ye He has helped me realize what my next step must be.’

To Win or to lose was no longer important for Jian Chen.

Though he felt heartbroken, he still looked graceful; his white robe was flowing in the air, and two faded lines of tears were on his cheeks.

Hearing Jian Chen’s surrender, Ye Wei pulled his right hand back and canceled his stance. He inwardly thought, ‘I must give him credit being able to use one of the sages’ stance is indeed impressive. I should thank him for showing me everything. If he had learned the whole stance, I would be the one surrendering right now.’

In the end, Jian Chen’s age meant a lot, he simply lacked experience.

During the fight, Ye Wei forcefully accelerated the Supernova stance’s second evolution to its limit. The runes on his bones were now shining

brighter and appeared as a mysterious star system.

Chapter 148: Zodiac Sword, Peerless Presence

When the bloodmoon disappeared entirely, Jian Chen's gaze grew calm again. Accepting his defeat, he wore a childish smile on his handsome face. 'Although I lost, I must thank brother Ye for allowing me to see the defect in my stance. Now, I can figure out the next step to finalize the Sword Master's stance, and that is more valuable than winning one match!'

"If there is ever an opportunity, I will definitely fight you again. I hope you won't mind so that I can learn more from you" Jian Chen curled his lips up gently and said.

"Hahaha! Definitely! I look forward to that moment Let's reach the peak of our cultivation together! " Ye Wei easily related to Jian Chen's eagerness. They smiled both openly, genuinely. Ye Wei and Jian Chen resembled real warriors who did not compete against each other but helped one another in a world dominated by demons and death on all sides.

"Yes...the peak of cultivation!" Jian Chan's eyes lit up imagining what the peak of cultivation would be like. He looked at Ye Wei with great admiration. "Ye Wei, we'll make it happen soon! Just you watch! Now, I will not fall behind any further!"

Ye Wei and Jian Chen exchanged smiles, bowed, and stepped away from what was left of the martial platform, officially completing the day's last fight.

"South Star is victorious again!"

"Ye Wei dominates, and South Star keeps its winning streak!"

"Wow! I could have never imagined the results of this year's tournament; Zhoutian Sword School lost, and even Galaxy Academy lost! Both of the undefeated teams of last year didn't even reach the top ten!"

"It's hard to believe that this year's champion will either be South Star

or Seven Star.”

“Nonetheless, I do look forward to these two dark horses fighting each other! It will surely be exciting even though we haven’t seen much of either school’s big shots!”

“I agree. Even though, Ye Wei only has fought a few times, every time he has outshone himself that even now I don’t know how strong he is! On the other hand, Tu Fu Sheng was just strange, everything, his fighting style, his maneuvers, his attitude...”

“Just thinking about the South Star and Seven Star’s matchup makes me shiver. It will surely be one of the best fights I have seen in my entire life!”

“I totally agree! Actually, when will the fight take place?”

Although still shocked from Jian Chen and Ye Wei’s epic battle, everyone shifted their focus on the two remaining undefeated teams.

This enthusiasm circulating in the audience extended all the way up to the cloud platform where most of the influential figures were now looking at City Lord Chen Yuan.

When it came to the tournament schedule, no one truly knew the order, “Your Highness, when will South Star be fighting Seven Star?” Most of the elites were at the tournament just for the social aspect and recruitment. Nevertheless, they were all excited and interested in the fight between Ye Wei and Tu Fu Sheng.

“The thirty-sixth, the last day! What a coincidence!” The City Lord said with a smirk. His calm tone exaggerated everyone else’s restlessness. However, beneath his serene exterior, he was, in fact, also very excited, he just didn’t reveal his emotions.

Overall, this year’s teams have displayed such superior quality fighting compared to all the other years. The four strongest teams, South Star, Seven Star, Zhoutian, and Galaxy, were able to place themselves into the top ten. In the next stage, the state-wide tournament.

Since the ten years Chen Yuan became City Lord, not once had any of

the teams from his region succeeding into getting t into the top ten, This lack of ability had always bothered, haunted him, always been one of his regrets.

After Ye Wei and Jian Chen returned to their palaces; the audience also left the tournament arena to rest and rejuvenate until tomorrow.

Returning to South Star's temporary residence, all the youngsters were still feeling ecstatic and on edge as if they had drunk a pot of coffee with sugar. They heatedly discussed and debated the fight between their hero and Jian Chen, turning their faces red.

Unlike his teammates, Ye Wei's attention was not focused on his victory; rather, he concentrated on studying the Zodiac Sword stance and the third evolution of Supernova stance alone in his room.

Out of the fight, Jian Chen was not the only person who grasped more about cultivation. Ye Wei was replaying all the moments from this morning's battle. Now, during this alone time, he memorized and analyzed what he saw and felt. By applying the inspiration he acquired then, Ye Wei hoped to improve his own cultivating and fighting techniques.

Tu Fu Sheng of Seven Star School was not an ordinary cultivator. Ye Wei easily felt this from the pressure emerging out of Tu Fe Sheng on the few occasions they encountered each other. Because Ye Wei could sense such unusual power and strength from Tu Fu Sheng, his eagerness and competitiveness would not allow him to relax fully.

Thus, Ye Wei decided to dedicate his attention to the Zodiac Sword.

'Zodiac Sword phase one, Peerless Presence!'

Unlike most sword stances, the Zodiac Sword did not require its user to wield a physical sword. Instead, the stance user condenses his Qi, and then turns the energy into the weapon. This was utilizing the same cultivation technique Jian Chen used to create his sword.

The Zodiac Sword contained three parts. They were the sword's Qi, sword's intent and sword's soul. Each of these aspects were divided into

four phases. The chapter obtained by Ye Wei was phase one of aspect one.

When Ye Wei mastered the Peerless Presence, he would be able to express the technique with a powerful sword array.

Although Ye Wei's current cultivation level hindered him from learning this Sky stance, it didn't mean he couldn't start learning the basics and principles. In fact, the Peerless Presence was very powerful on its own, and it applied to many other stances and forms.

"There is only one extreme, one method..." Ye Wei read the first chapter out loud, slowly trying to understand the meaning behind these combinations of abstract words.

Although the Zodiac Sword's text was obscure and at times incomprehensible for the average mind, Ye Wei, because he had a great cultivation foundation, was able to understand these abstruse concepts that could not be written any other way.

'Trash, trash, trash! Why do you even bother putting in such effort? It's just a stupid Sky stance!' The Progenitor dismissively chuckled, 'I was as strong as a human returned prime Warrior when I was born, and after two years of cultivating, I became as powerful as a god's prime Warrior!'

Ye Wei rolled his eyes and unwillingly asked 'So why did you act so pathetic both times you sensed the Combat Master's presence in my mind?'

'Human sages are shameless! As I said before, they take advantage of innocents, and harvest energy from loyal, civilian supporters!' The Progenitor was irked just by the name of human sages; he could not let the historic defeat go.

Although there was some truth to what the Progenitor said, demons were born stronger than humans, if the sages did not take advantage of runic magic and use the whole race's accumulative energy, humanity would be extinct.

'More than a million demons are walking this planet, they compete

against each other, every day they have to fight to survive, the weaker clans quickly died down. Centuries after the first demons were born, natural selection had made strengthened our race. In contrast, look at mankind, toleration, sympathy, all those contributed to your pathetically comfortable lifestyles, and that's why humanity will eventually become weak, so weak we will consume all of you!' The Progenitor laughed mischievously.

Ye Wei comprehended the logic behind the Progenitor's argument. He understood competition was necessary for growth as a fighter, especially after his battles he fought.

'Ye Wei, you know, you should convert to us. Stop wasting your time with these pathetic humans. You will get access to eternal power, and, furthermore, we have a lot of beautiful and exquisite demon females...' The Progenitor chuckled.

'Stop patronizing and sugar-coating your disgusting race! Humankind will not go extinct! What we lack in strength we make up for in intellect. Moreover, we adopt and learn from our shared history and experience in our quest to become stronger than you demons! Maybe centuries ago demons ruled, but everyone knows demons now fear mankind! So, we don't have demon blood or stances that contain power already ingrained, but we use our wisdom to manipulate the power of runes, creating and using stances. Humanity's intellect gives it power. Dare I say, it won't be long until another super stance like the sages' will be created.'

'Then, you demons can all beg for your lives!' Ye Wei argued coldly, 'do you know why we are protected by the heavens? That's because we are wise, and we have empathy, I hope you see how foolish you sounded, I am a teenager, and I am already smarter than you stupid dog!'

The Progenitor choked on his words. He was confronted with the truth, and could not fight back. Deep inside, he did know that his intellect was not comparable to humans' and this infuriated him. He couldn't think of a way to win the argument against a mere teenager.

Ye Wei remained stubborn since he was confident of winning the

argument against the Progenitor. So fearless under the protection of the Combat Master, he sarcastically shot back. 'You are just the consciousness of an old, stupid dog!'

The Progenitor did not argue back. He had noticed the recent development of the human race was fast. Contrastly, the very first demon that walked the earth had been a hundred thousand years ago in a primal form. People, on the other hand, had only inhabited the earth a few thousand years ago. Additionally, he observed that the recent attacks against human beings were becoming less and less successful.

'Okay, whatever wisdom, that's your advantage, so what?! The Corpse Progenitor has already called upon the six Ghost Emperors who have started invading the human dynasties, and Zhou dynasty is one of their targets.' After illogically spitting out this classified information, the Progenitor realized he spoke too much.

'The Corpse Progenitor? Six Ghost Emperors?' What does he mean?!

Ye Wei frowned, worried about the Zhou dynasty he desired to tell someone of importance immediately about what he just heard. Although he did not enjoy talking to the black scale Progenitor, once in awhile, he was grateful for the tips the Progenitor accidentally spurted out.

'Zodiac Sword!' Ye Wei realized panicking wouldn't be beneficial to anyone. So, he ignored the black dog in his Sentient and continued training, learning the Sky stance's foundation.

Ye Wei lifted his finger and drew the runes as instructed, forming one Qi sword in the air. Instead of watching the tournament, He focused on his training. None of the remaining fights interested him except the very last one – his battle against Seven Star.

In the evening of the second day of training, Ye Wei was able to form two Qi swords.

Before the sunset on the third day, he was able to create seven Qi swords.

Although the progress was slow, Ye Wei was none the less satisfied by

the speed.

What Ye Wei did not know was how ridiculous his progress was. A significant portion of the cultivators, lucky enough to learn this stance, formed only Qi Sword from the complex, specialized runes at the end of their lives not during the beginning.

Ye Wei hit an obstacle as he figured out how to get the tenth sword from the runes. For a change in his environment, he decided to put aside perfecting the Zodiac Sword and spent his time memorizing all his stances he had learned. Then he took notes on runic knowledge for extra benefit.

After repeating this schedule for some days now, he upgraded his Selenic Triple-Primal Sword with Jian Chen's Bloodmoon stance.

The sword dominated and ruled over all the other weapons. Thus the sword was the king over its subjective weapons, and Ye Wei finally comprehended why this was so.

Chapter 149: High Level Myst Stance

The next opponents South Star Academy faced, after seeing the fight between Ye Wei and Zhoutian Sword School's Jian Chen, all surrendered. They didn't even try to fight, and therefore the public did not see Ye Wei on the martial platforms ever since the fight where he defeated the bloodmoon.

Back at South Star's palace, Ye Wei sat alone in the courtyard for seven days and seven nights.

In the courtyard, the moon shown silver and produced a silent but elegant atmosphere; the stars twinkled and garnished the empty night sky in concordance with the moon. The bitingly chill night breeze was pecking Ye Wei on his cheek. The slight drop of temperature touched him on the shoulder, and he slowly opened his eyes.

'The Glacial Emperor created the Selenic Seven Stances. Hmmm...and it is also a mid-level Myst stance, refining this will be in no way easy,' Ye Wei clenched his fist and thought to himself.

Having cultivated and trained behind closed doors for a week, Ye Wei had gained great understanding about the Zhoutian Sword Notion, Blood Moon Assassin Sword. However, when it came to actually infusing the principles and powers of those techniques to strengthen his own; in short, he was going nowhere.

"I can surely make Selenic Triple-Primal Sword a high-level Myst stance if I manage to infuse Jian Chen's two stances to it," he mumbled to himself.

"It would have been nice to accomplish this infusion before the next fight since a high-level Myst stance could really win fights on its own." He looked up at the moon, sighed and felt slightly deflated

The stars shone bright in the quiet evening sky. Ye Wei had gazed upon the night sky so long and so much the zodiac star alignments and planetary arrangement, the inspiration used to create the Selenic stances, had burned into Ye Wei's mind. Shutting his eyes, his consciousness

followed the night sky's pattern and entered into a zen state.

"The stars are framing the moon just like a picture." Ye Wei was in awe, murmuring to himself. The scenic view in his mind amused him., Although still stuck in the refinement process, his mood was lightened.

"Framing the moon..." A spark of inspiration suddenly struck him. The understanding of the stance and what he had been practicing for a whole week finally made sense. An idea bombarded his mind.

"I get it now! I get it now!" After a momentary pause, ecstasy swept the air. Any hint of depression on Ye Wei's face vanished entirely.

He bent his fingers and flicked them, shooting a screen of runes. The runes lightened the courtyard and turned into Selenic Triple-Primal Sword's three blades.

"Zhoutian Sword Notion should become the frame!" Ye Wei stared at the stance in front of him, smiled and pointed at the pivots of its structure.

"Zoom! Zoom! Zoom!"

The moment the sword notion used by Jian Chen was infused to the Glacial Emperor's stance, the rune sequence came alive, the swords deconstructed, and they became a mist of twinkling array of stars.

And the array began to flow and circulate in a mysterious pattern.

"Bloodmoon sword intent!" Ye Wei waved his finger in the air like a sword, shooting out a few more short rune sequences that attached perfectly onto the branches of the original sequence. The rune sequence became a star array that sculpted the stance into a moon shape.

The courtyard then transformed into a miniature milky way.

'Selenic Triple-Primal Sword!' Ye Wei gazed upon the downsized star array, once again activated the stance, transforming the runes into swords again.

However, the force waves' frequency was completely different. It accelerated and pulsed like a newborn star.

“Zhoutian should be its new shape; bloodmoon its new soul, and the Selenic Sword as its new foundation!” Ye Wei intensely stared at the shapes in front of him.

He grunted and stomped the ground. All three spectral blades vibrated in the air; they then all quickly merged together by the gravitational pull of the stars in the pattern’s center.

The runic blades integrated to become a ten meters long ancient sword. The ground shook during the same second the transformation finished. The new stance’s energy was pure, dense, and rotated to the other runes’ pull.

The heavens responded by casting a wide, thick pillar of cosmic energy from million miles away, tearing through the sky and landing on Ye Wei and completely engulfing him.

Judging from the light pillar’s size, Ye Wei could tell the Selenic Triple-Primal Sword just became a peak high-level Myst stance. From continuously absorbing the rush of vast cosmic gift, he could also feel his Sentient and dantian expanding.

The energy surge was pure and uncontaminated. It tickled Ye Wei’s skin to open up its pores to speed up the absorption.

‘Three-star condensed prime level!’ Under the nourishment, Ye Wei’s body strength reached a new height as the cosmic energy decompressed within him.

“Zoom! Zoom!”

The surge lingered in and around Ye Wei’s body. The cosmic energy continued strengthening him even after the breakthrough. By the time his body dealt with the foreign yet familiar energy, Ye Wei was already close to another breakthrough.

Ye Wei’s refined stance disappeared; his eyes shone brighter than the stars above.

“A high-level Myst stance! A peak high-level Myst stance!” He lifted his head to gaze upon the moon and the night sky that inspired him. His

body shook with excitement.

“That was a great deal of will-force and Qi I just spent. Though I just broke through to become a three-star condensed prime Warrior, I will still need the second evolution of Supernova stance to support this refined Selenic Sword stance” Ye Wei smiled as he thought to himself. He knew that the extra Qi and will-force was in no sense wasted. The new stance could transform his energy to power.

Having achieved a stance refinement and a breakthrough in the same evening, it was almost impossible for him to remain calm. Yet, Ye Wei was still able to sit himself down and began to consolidate his cultivation.

“All the stances I had refined in the past were simpler stances. I could basically find structural flaws and correct them but not this time.” thinking to himself, Ye Wei attempted to learn from his experience while the memory was still fresh, “I was getting close to it, but I need some diversion to see more.”

“Nevertheless, coming up with a stance structure in comparison with shaping one, shaping would still be easier. It’s no wonder the greats always sought inspiration from Nature and other creatures. Natural existence already makes logical sense.”

Ye Wei’s mind gradually broadened, and he became more and more at ease with himself, realising the more he forced himself the wrong way, the less flexible his thoughts would be.

When Ye Wei was quietly cultivating, a figure sneaked into the courtyard without a sound.

“Who is it!?” Ye Wei shouted. His eyes fell onto a dark silhouette. His hostility evaporated as he recognized who the intruder was.

The pure moonlight fell onto her as the night breeze pushed away a large cloud. The glossy purple hair reflected the moonlight like the surface of a peaceful pond. Her dress, as white as the moon itself, sculpted her body and transitions seamlessly onto her pale, glittering skin.

Her brows were graceful, her cheeks rosey, but her looks could not hide from anyone the loneliness displayed, loneliness that resembled the solitary north star in the sky.

It had been three years since Ye Wei last seen this face. She now had the curves of a woman. The child-like features had faded and was replaced by an air of melancholy.

Lin Ziyan looked at Ye Wei, for a moment the sadness vanished in her crystal clear eyes before returning to a calm, emotionless state.

She did picture their reunion, but it was a different experience than the moment. She could tell that the handsome young man had done a great deal of maturing, more than just the physical aspects. He had matured greatly in his life experience and cultivation.

“Ziyan...” a shiver went down Ye Wei’s spine, he involuntarily stepped forward in sheer excitement.

As he greeted the girl he remembered his sleepless nights. Suddenly, he felt a wall of invisible force brewing in front of him like a storm. He realized this force was Lin Ziyan’s Qi, stopping him from getting any closer.

Not only did Lin Ziyan’s raging Qi stopped Ye Wei from getting closer, it knocked him off balance, causing him to straddle backwards. He could feel her cultivation level was high; so high, he struggled to imagine how she achieved it in a mere three years. He understood their cultivation difference between them didn’t get any smaller.

For three years, Ye Wei always longed for the day when he could be reunited with Lin Ziyan. Now the time actually came. He realized even after longing for this day, he was not ready for it, and he was saddened by the worry and sorrow he could see between her eyes.

Having to keep distance with Ye Wei, Lin Ziyan was also saddened, but she knew what she must do, or else the attachment would just hurt them even more later on.

“Ye Wei, you should return to Green Moon City as soon as possible!

There you will be safer. There have been reports of demonic activity in Ning City, all over Qing State, and even at the capital. They will soon learn your name which means you will be in grave danger.” Lin Ziyan said worryingly, her eyes displayed concern.

“Demons?” Ye Wei was abruptly reminded what the Progenitor had said, “Ziyan, I need to tell you something!”

“Ye?” She looked into Ye Wei’s eyes.

“I came across some information regarding a demon invasion, the Corpse Progenitor, and six ghost emperors had infiltrated a few dynasties. Apparently, they are looking to takeover Zhou dynasty too!” Ye Wei was startled, now the Black Scale Progenitor’s words were more or less confirmed. As well, he was worried if Lin Ziyan was in danger.

She frowned as she heard the news. Caught in a deep thought, Lin Ziyan wondered. ‘If the demons are sending someone of that caliber, it’s easy to narrow the targets down and warn them. That explains the amount of vandalism I’ve been hearing about too. The ghost emperors must have recruited humans to destroy the sages’ statues. Otherwise, they had no way to access those artifacts.’ she snapped out of her deep thought and lifted her head. “Wei, do you still have the piece of jade I gave you?”

“Of course!” Ye Wei reached inside his hidden pocket and presented the spirit jade.

“Good, keep it close to you and don’t show it to anyone. It just might save your life if you’re in danger. Please listen to me, return to Green Moon City, and meet with Master Yi as soon as possible!” Li Ziyan looked wary, ready to bid her farewells, not sure when it will be the next time they would meet.

“Back to Green Moon City?” Ye Wei shook his head determinedly, “What does that solve? I’ve chosen this path, I want to become stronger, and I cannot keep running. No matter what danger I might face!” He lifted his head and looked at Lin Ziyan, ‘You cannot be more incorrect if you think I am still the unreliable kid who always needed help from others! I

have my goals and I am not afraid to pursue them!’

“Ye Wei! You don’t understand what kind of enemies you will be facing! Some of them are above returned prime cultivation level!” Lin Ziyang was becoming more emotional as she explained the reasons why she was concerned, “Furthermore, your enemies will not only be demons, they have human associates too. You will not know who you can trust. Who is a friend and who is a foe will be indistinguishable!”

“As I said Ziyang, I will become stronger, partially because of you. To be good enough for you is my dream; it is my goal! It’s too late for me to back down now!” Ye Wei smiled, but the bittersweetness lingered after his purposeful words.

Lin Ziyang was touched and startled by Ye Wei’s heartfelt confession. Nevertheless, she could not decide on her feelings. She was tracking demons before she reached Ning City, and she unintentionally learned that Ye Wei was taking part in the school tournament. She could not contain herself. She had to see Ye Wei since he was one of the only people who made her feel the warmth of home.

After three years, Ye Wei grew up to become someone she was physically attracted to, which made it more important for her to cut ties.

Lin Ziyang turned around and said decisively, “So be it, take care of yourself, and so long.”

Just as she was taking the first step away from him, Ye Wei noticed a trail of blood beside her feet, “You are injured!? Why didn’t you say?”

“Why? Because it’s none of your business!” Lin Ziyang then disappeared into night. She left no trace of ever being there in the courtyard apart from the tiny bit of blood.

Ye Wei thought about chasing after her, but he gave up the idea seeing how quickly Lin Ziyang went away with the speed enhancing stance he had no chance of matching.

“Is that how you greet an old friend? Ha...” Ye Wei felt an ache in his heart. The mental wounds suddenly hurt as much as if they were fresh.

“Three-star condensed prime level is not enough. I need to become a returned prime Warrior at least!” Ye Wei angrily said to himself as he thought about the path before him. The demons and the possible plots from men he would encounter and confront.

Chapter 150: Flesh and Bone

The sun rose from the east as dawn slowly rose the screen of darkness. The soft morning lights dyed the dark curtain of mist in the sky red, and the martial platforms glittered in the morning sun contrasted against the otherwise plain mountaintop.

Today people were squeezing together under the platforms, and hair was flowing in the wind like grass in a field. Today there were more people watching on the cloud platform than even the first day of the tournament. The matchup between South Star and Seven Star, more precisely between Ye Wei and Tu Fusheng, attracted everyone that wanted some entertainment. It also attracted the most powerful men who wished to strengthen their small armies.

“It’s such a rare occasion; I don’t remember the last time when the first, second, and third place of the tournament were decided on the same day. I could barely sleep last night thinking about what could happen today.

“South Star Academy and Seven Star School are going to be fighting for the championship on platform one, whereas Zhoutian and Galaxy will have their showdown on platform two to determine runner-up!”

“I don’t really see Galaxy winning after witnessing the fight between Ye Wei and Jian Chen. The three God’s Seven from Galaxy are strong, but Jian Chen showed the power of a six-star condensed prime Warrior!”

“I wouldn’t be so certain. I heard that Galaxy’s Feng Yi took the defeat very seriously and has been training behind closed doors since the day he lost to Tu Fusheng. Rumour has it that one of the elites from Galaxy had a breakthrough.”

“Ha, that’s vague. What kind of breakthrough? Feng Yi was already a four-star condensed prime Warrior; therefore, he would need two breakthroughs to stand a chance against Jian Chen!”

“Your discussions are pointless. Don’t act like you care about anything else when South Star and Seven Star are going to be fighting! Ye Wei, that sixteen year old monster, showed the power of an eight-star condensed

prime Warrior! Eight-star! He is stronger than the patriarch in my family for crying out loud!”

“Well, you can’t count Seven Star’s Tu Fusheng off. His body was so strong that he didn’t even need to use Qi when he single-handedly crushed the Galaxy team.”

“That is true... I wonder what kind of training he must have gone through to achieve such bodily strength. His capabilities are almost unnatural.”

“Ye Wei and Fu Tusheng, a matchup between two super geniuses what a perfect ending to this year’s tournament!”

The crowd had gathered long before the fights were going to start. They were speculating with undisguised excitement on their faces.

“I saw you talking to Ye Wei the other day! You have to introduce me after the fight!” Said a young and playful-looking cultivator who was standing together with the Golden Wood Academy team. He looked at his sister with his puppy eyes as he begged.

“Who do you think you are? Why don’t you take a good look at yourself before using me, you two are the same age and you’re still a seven-star Warrior! You are not worthy to know Ye Wei!” Xue Yao knocked her brother’s skull while lecturing him.

‘Ye Wei’s power is astonishing! No wonder why he was chosen to be the Glacial Emperor’s inheritor!’ She thought to herself while trying to remember all the extraordinary attacks he showed throughout the tournament. While thinking this an air of solemnity was visible on her soft face. ‘He is going to get so many offers from these families...’

She looked to the cloud platform with a smile, ‘and maybe even the Green Army or the City Lord, who has Supreme Chen Feng’s blood running through his veins.’

Under countless pairs of excited eyes, gazes of respect, Ye Wei and the South Star team stepped onto platform one. They looked confident as Fu Tusheng led the Seven Star School team on the opposite side.

The rest of the teams were less eager to fight than these two top contestants. The City Lord made an announcement after all the teams reached their platforms to kickstart the thirty-sixth and last day of fights of this year's tournament.

"Brother Chen Yuan, between Ye Wei and Seven Star's Fu Tusheng who do you think will win?" A bearded, rough-looking man in golden armor spoke enthusiastically as his sharp eyes swept across platform one.

The bearded man from the military as was returned prime Warrior commander Shi Qing. He came all the way from the army's Qing state headquarters to attend the anticipated fight.

Although most of the cultivators on the cloud were strong and respected, even the weakest of them was still an eight-star condensed prime Warrior. The bearded man in golden armor was the only person worthy enough to address the City Lord so informally.

The special patterns on Shi Qing's golden armor were earned with his blood, sweat, and tears. Only the man who was in charge of the Green Army in the Qing State had such prestigious decoration on his armor plates that protected him from countless lethal strikes from both men and demons.

"Brother Shi, both these kids are impressive. I really can't say until the fight ends, I think they both have a few tricks up their sleeves. You will just have to watch the whole fight together with me as it unfolds! Haha!" Chen Yuan said while looking at the two unexpected talents and smiling, he was actually surprised the fight attracted someone so high up in the ranks. If it wasn't for his bloodline, then he would not have the privilege to talk to the commander as equals.

On platform one, South Star Academy and Seven Star School's representatives stood glaring at their opponents.

Tu Fusheng's eyes were bright green as he glared at South Star line up with a strange, snake-like gaze. They finally landed on Ye Wei, who was standing in front of his teammates. He smiled, and a burst of violent pressure flowed towards Ye Wei like a stream of scorching hot magma.

Lie Jian, Chen Mo, and the South Star representatives that stood behind Ye Wei became pale and started trembling under the immense pressure imposed by Tu Fusheng.

Ye Wei saw what his opponent was doing so he took a half step forward. The moment his toes landed again on the amethyst, a screen of Qi rose from the ground blocking the violent pressure helped relieving his teammates from its terrible oppression.

“All of you get off the platform.” Ye Wei said.

Liu Jian and Chen Mo couldn't help themselves and had the same thought. ‘Looks like we won't be needed again.’ The South Star team jumped off the martial platform while the Seven Star cultivators left Tu Fusheng, the only person on the platform with Ye Wei.

Although both of them were revered by their teammates, they were also seen as monsters.

“This is nice. I have honestly lost interest in everyone taking part in this tournament apart from you!” Tu Fusheng licked his lips while staring at Ye Wei, admired his opponent's capability of casually neutralizing the greeting he sent just by taking a step forward. Hidden in his voice was a vicious bloodlust, “I am ready to beat you anytime, just bring it.”

When Tu Fusheng's insolent voice went quiet, he stomped forward and became a flash of light. He disappeared and reappeared in the middle of the circular amethyst platform. His movement brought a whirlwind to the nearby audience.

The turbulence fluttered Ye Wei's robe and hair, but he stood as still and steady as a mountain in a storm; he was untouched and unconcerned. He coldly looked at Tu Fusheng as he calmly strode out to meet his opponent in the circle's center.

Ye Wei could feel an indistinct, strange aura around Tu Fusheng. This aura caused him to be cautious as he recognized it as a great threat.

“Here we go! Show me what you've got!” Tu Fusheng chuckled and turned into a phantom again. He suddenly appeared in front of Ye Wei

clenching his dark fist. He then threw it ferociously.

“Boom!”

Tu Fusheng's fist fell onto Ye Wei like a guided meteorite. Without any signs of him using Qi, his fist tore through the air at incredible speed, and it bombarded the ears of the audience with a shrill sound. A fearsome force wave shortly followed, fracturing the strained amethyst platform.

Debris was flying around on the platform, and the audience on the cloud platform was shocked. They could all tell that Tu Fusheng's fist carried the strength to easily topple a six-star condensed prime Warrior.

In the previous thirty-five fights, Tu Fusheng managed to defeat his opponents with only one punch every time, with no exceptions. Even when he faced Zhoutian Sword School and Galaxy Academy, it was just a simple strike but an astonishingly effective one.

“This is the result of years of body quenching training! I assume all his body parts were strengthened by enhancing stances!”

“I think so too!”

The crowd on the cloud platforms and down below couldn't help but widen their eyes; they were getting nervous for Ye Wei. They knew it was already too late for Ye Wei to perform a defensive stance because of the sheer speed of Tu Fusheng's strike.

“Tu Fusheng can fire this Qi-less strike before his opponent even moved.”

‘Zodiac Sword!’ Ye Wei said while calmly staring at the enlarging fist in front. He lifted his finger and gently touched his opponent's knuckles.

Tu Fusheng's face changed as he felt a sharp prick on his fist followed by immense pain. He reflectively retrieved his fist and stopped the momentum by the tip of his toes. He kicked the ground sending himself flying backwards and brought his back down parallel to the platform to reduce drag.

Not only did Ye Wei stop the strike that kept Seven Star's winning

streak alive, but he also just became the first cultivator who was able to knock back the undefeated Tu Fusheng.

The South Star team let out their breath, relieved to see what they thought to be a good sign; an advantage Ye Wei managed to gain.

“Zodiac Sword!?” City Lord Chen Yuan and Commander Shi Qing exclaimed in unison. They could not believe what they just felt and saw.

Both of them were experienced enough, knowledgeable enough, to recognize Ye Wei’s technique. They were surprised to see a partial Sky stance that was pretty much extinct in the dynasty since centuries ago.

Although unfinished, the best stance the Runemaster Union had access to was still rare and powerful enough to shock the two strongest men in the audience.

The audience became lively, they were here expecting a fight but were still shocked to see Ye Wei stopping the strike that had never been successfully defended throughout the tournament.

“Ye Wei is too incredible. Even Feng Yi, and the rest of last year’s winning team were not able to react before they got knocked out!”

“This is more like it, things are going to be interesting I think. I really cannot tell who is going to win now!”

Although nobody else recognized the stance Ye Wei was using, they could tell they were in for a ride seeing him backing Tu Fusheng off with only one finger.

“How incredibly sharp...” Tu Fusheng looked at the scar on his fist, while furiously mumbling.

“You dare injure me!” Tu Fusheng’s expression became aggressive, and the platform began to rattle as his eyes shone green. The debris around him mysteriously began to float.

“Zoom!”

The green glow within his pupils filled his eyes and leaked into his skin. It spread all over his dark, toned body with a rune-like pattern.

It did not take long before the green pattern covered his face and made him look more like a beast, wrapped in raging Qi to match his wild appearance.

“This time it’s over!” Tu Fusheng aggressively rushed towards Ye Wei as the strength of a seven-star condensed prime Warrior behind his fist was decorated by a green, web-like pattern. A cloud of smoke formed around the punch created by friction.

“How can Tu Fusheng have such strength?” Xu He’s face became pale. He was threatened knowing that he himself would struggle to defend against such a powerful strike.

“This is the scary thing about this kid is that he never needed to use a stance because of his strength. It’s harder to defend against a strike than a stance because it takes no time, no runes to punch giving his opponent less time to react. Why do you think Jian Chen lost? It was obvious, he could not keep up with Tu Fusheng’s speed.” Zhoutian Sword School’s principal Jian Shiyu sighed. “The new age of youngsters will soon replace us!”

Ye Wei observed quietly at his rampaging opponent, realized luck and intuition played a big part in why he could defend himself just in time. Otherwise, he would have been crushed by the punch that could easily knock out a seven-star condensed prime Warrior.

Chapter 151: Third

Tu Fusheng's second punch displayed his frightening strength that could easily bring any seven-star condensed prime Warrior to their knees; even at a state level, he could be counted as one of the best young cultivators. His fist propelled through the thick air filled with Ye Wei's and his own Qi. It arrived in front of South Star's ace in the blink of an eye.

The chaotic wind was slapping Ye Wei on the face but he did not flinch, and he did not look like he was going to bother with dodging either. He just stood still and watched his opponent's dark fist.

It wasn't that he gave up, but that he was so focused on the stance he was charging up.

While everyone in the audience gasped for air, Ye Wei took a step forward. He wrapped his body with Zodiac Sword Qi ten times strengthening it to a frightening extent while launching himself right at Tu Fusheng's strike.

The spectral swords shrunk and condensed around Ye Wei's hands, forming a transparent energy around them. He then clenched his fists, threw them out with the momentum of an exploding star.

The layer of air in front of Ye Wei was crushed by his stance's impact and it created a conical void filled with his Zodiac Sword Qi.

"Bang!"

Ye Wei's empowered punch landed solidly onto Tu Fusheng's dark, green fists. The crash set off two fearsome recoiling force waves that ended up swapping the platform. The previous fractures on the amethyst platform split even more making them wider and deeper. The whole platform was shaking violently and becoming unsteady. It was showing signs of completely breaking apart.

Being in the eye of the storm, neither Ye Wei or Tu Fusheng were affected by this explosion of energy. Both of them levitated to avoid the

risk of losing their footing.

‘Supernova stance!’ The Zodiac Sword had taken a toll on the Qi reserve in Ye Wei’s dantian, so he activated the first stage of his amplification stance to compensate. The golden runes engraved onto his bones began to shine bright and circulated over his skeleton.

“Boom! Boom!”

All of a sudden, Ye Wei’s Qi violently expanded granting him triple his normal strength. The Supernova stance was one of a kind; its amplification effects increased exponentially in proportion to the user’s cultivation, and now that Ye Wei was a three-star condensed prime Warrior, he was able to reach the body strength of a five-star condensed prime Warrior effortlessly.

A shrill sound echoed between the raised martial platforms around Ye Wei and Tu Fusheng’s fight, and at the same time the air around platform one was being drained by Supernova stance.

Benefit from the surge of amplified Qi, the Zodiac Sword became harder and sharper, destroying the green pattern on Tu Fusheng’s fist.

The moment the green pattern broke, Tu Fusheng’s bodily strength dropped rapidly. He was no longer a match for Ye Wei’s sword Qi. His dark skin was torn, revealing the bones of Tu Fusheng’s knuckles.

“I want you dead!” Tu Fusheng howled. The green glow in his eyes shone brighter, and the green pattern covering his body re-lit and expanded in all directions.

‘Starblink Steps!’ Moments before the green energy waves touched Ye Wei, a stream of energy resembling the milky way appeared under his feet.

“Whoosh!”

Ye Wei’s movement became unpredictable. His figure blurred, and he rode the glowing light beneath his feet. Dodging wave after wave of Tu Fusheng’s energy burst, he was occasionally grazed but the impacts of the waves were constantly redirected.

“What kind of stance is that?” The experienced cultivators on the cloud platform scratched their heads, shocked while admiring the mysterious speed boosting stance.. None of them had come across or recognized a stance similar to Ye Wei’s.

Tu Fusheng’s strength impressed many but when compared to Ye Wei’s stance, it became less of a feat. As the stance was not high-graded but mysteriously unpredictable.

“Even I would struggle dodging those bursts of energy, but it doesn’t look to be a problem for Ye Wei at all. It wouldn’t be long until he overtakes me, I think actually in some aspects he is already ahead of me!” Xu He, vice-principal of South Star, said startled and concerned. He looked at Ye Wei’s drifting figure, shocked by the level of talent.

The vice-principal was pleasantly surprised by Ye Wei once again. This time he applauded Ye Wei on another secret techniques, one that was beyond his understanding and knowledge of stances.

“Ye Wei is the youngest Runemaster Qing State had ever seen. The fact that we know nothing of the stance until now certainly means he created it himself!” Chen Yuan looked at Ye Wei and saw Master Yi’s form in the young one’s fighting style, exclaimed, “Oh Yi Yan, oh Yi Yan, you are a far greater teacher than I am.”

“Regardless of the fight’s outcome, I am going to recruit Ye Wei; he is qualified for sure!” Shi Qing looked at Ye Wei with his bronze eyes and spoke with great appreciation.

“Brother Shi Qing, I’m afraid it’s not that simple. Just because the Green Army wants to recruit him ,doesn’t mean he will oblige.” Chen Yuan wisely commented and gave Shi Qing a reproachful look, his lips twitched as his words came out.

Ye Wei was as good a Runemaster as he was a cultivator. Even though the Green Army was interested, they still needed the Runemaster Union’s approval.

“What do you mean? Who dares stand against the Green Army?” The commander stared at the City Lord, his thick black brows arched

upwards, interrogating in an overbearing tone.

City Lord Chen Yuan looked at the aggravated commander, smiled and shook his head. He then casted his attention back onto the amethyst platform. 'Not many people can challenge your authority in Qing State, but Ke Bai is one of them. As well, he just so happens to be the President of the Runemaster Union. I wouldn't be surprised if he has something to say about the army wanting to recruit Ye Wei.'

While Ye Wei was in the heat of battle, he felt a chilling tingle go down his spine as he noticed his opponent's presence was similar to that of the demon who ambushed him weeks ago with the energy of black scale, currently in Ye Wei's possession.

'This is not an enhancing stance, like Ziyan said, probably, the demons are infiltrating right now, and Tu Fusheng could very well be one of them!' Ye Wei thought to himself and empowered his sword Qi.

Due to the Mystic Mount's presence in his Sentient, Ye Wei had superior demon sensory compared even to returned prime Warriors, making him the only human-being on the venue that knew Tu Fusheng's true identity.

'Well done little boy, I didn't think you would notice. He is a strong one isn't he? Mastering the Green Corpse technique is quite a rare feat for a young demon like him. Now it's only just a matter of seconds before he slaughters you all like helpless cattle!' The Black Scale Progenitor's voice echoed in Ye Wei's mind.

'Thanks for confirming, now I know I don't have to hold anything back.' Ye Wei replied, 'Old dog, this is Ning City, a human territory! Good luck beating us here.'

'Pfft, us demons can enter and leave a small city like this anytime we wish!. But the fact that he is here means he came prepared. Don't bother saving the city kid. It will soon turn to dust anyways I'd just try to stay alive if I were you!' The Progenitor taunted insolently.

"Stop, listening to you makes me feel stupid." Ye Wei grunted and channeled his Qi.

“Ow!”

Tu Fusheng made a strange noise from his throat and swallowed a large breath of air. The green pattern on his skin moved into his mouth; the blaring green glow on him disappeared, but his energy's presence grew. His wounds began to heal, strands of muscles quickly being synthesized, covered the knuckle bones as his dark skin also regrew.

‘Eh?’ Ye Wei sensed danger. He stepped on the shining star shapes under his feet, continued to escape from Tu Fusheng's shockwaves. Ye Wei try to open his mouth wanting to warn others about his opponent's real identity only to find he could not make a sound. The air around him was dense; so dense, he became contained in an area where his actions were constricted, limited.

The waves came from all directions, crushing Ye Wei from all angles.

‘Kid, you are in trouble now. He has used the power of his true demon form. Using my scale's power will be your only way out. If you really want to live you should follow my instructions.’ The Progenitor chuckled.

‘Shut it!’ Ye Wei pinched himself to stay sharp and refocused on Tu Fusheng.

‘Fine, if you want to die, then shutt me off, but you'll regret it!’ The Progenitor's words sounded in Ye Wei's head.

Tu Fusheng's eyes turned green entirely, the glow was mesmerising, his presence kept expanding, caging the audience in a horrifying atmosphere.

“Nine-star condensed prime, there is no mistake...”

“Dear Sages! Tu Fusheng is already a nine-star condensed prime Warrior?!” The weaker cultivators on the cloud platform were startled, shocked, and slightly ashamed of themselves.

“How can this kid be a nine-star condensed prime Warrior already?” Xu He's face went pale. He worried for his team, and, most importantly, he worried for Ye Wei. ‘What am I going to say to Master Yi if his only legacy apprentice got injured under my watch!?’

The vice-principal's lips became chapped and dry from the frequent panic-inducing heavy breathing.

"Xu He, relax, can't you see Ye Wei is still feeling relaxed? He always dealt with whatever stood in his way, and he handled the difficult circumstances rather easily with secret techniques we never expected him to know." Jian Shiyu comfortingly said with a deep voice; he placed his hand on vice-principal Xu's shoulder while observing Ye Wei's moves. His eyes light up, brighter than stars in a night sky.

Jian Shiyu was himself close to becoming a returned prime Warrior. Although he appeared calm, he was shocked and worried as well. He thought that the platforms were too weak and small for the fighting on top of it.

The important figures on the cloud platform looked at each other in silence. They wanted to speak but didn't quite know what to say. They felt strange as they knew how hard it was, how much effort they spent cultivating just to be as strong as this teenager.

"Nine-star condensed prime, I did not expect a cultivator of this level could be found in your region! Chen Yuan, you know this Tu Fusheng kid could probably place in the top thirty if he fights the Qing State tournament right?"

"This is not looking good for Ye Wei!" Chen Yuan shook his head, the City Lord was a close friend of Master Yi's, and he couldn't help but pick a side. He sympathized about Ye Wei's troubling predicament as he knew it was going to be at best an uphill battle for the young Runemaster.

"Tu Fusheng, Ye Wei, Jian Chen, Feng Yi, the standard of this year's tournament is far higher than any of the other years!" Chen Yuan smiled. He was sure that these four prodigies could one day become influential forces.

While the audience were admiring the quality of this year's contestants, Ye Wei was caught in a dire situation, a situation that could kill him. He adjusted his breathing pattern, injected Qi into his bones, and aimed to activate the Supernova stance.

‘Second evolution!’ The runes inside Ye Wei’s body shone golden and flowed quickly. His power tripled in the matter of a second.

As his Qi rushed into of his bones, amplified them, and his strength kept increasing, Ye Wei achieved a nine-star condensed prime level as the Supernova stance reached the second evolution. Although he would be struck by recoiling force once the stance fades, he could not afford to hold anything back during this fatal moment.

Ye Wei felt the changes in the Qi flow inside his body, but he could not see the tadpole patterned runes developing on his bones which were linking together.

Chapter 152: Reveal

Ye Wei and Tu Fusheng unevenly stood on the opposite edges of the bed of amethyst shards and debris. Both of them were releasing a significant amount of Qi and both at nine-star condensed prime Warrior level.

“Pfft, an amplification stance again, I want to see how long you can keep yourself at that level!” Tu Fusheng glared at Ye Wei. He stomped the ground and launched himself forward.

“Boom! Boom! Boom!”

Tu Fusheng punched in quick succession, dense like rain in a storm, aggressively tearing through layers of defensive Qi towards Ye Wei’s heart with the intent to kill him.

‘Peerless Presence!’ Ye Wei channeled his Qi to keep his stance active. His gaze was cold, set on Tu Fusheng. He did not plan on dodging him; instead. He wrapped his fist with the Zodiac Sword Qi. Taking a step forward, he threw punches as he steadied his footing. Every strike had the sharpness and strength to cut through solid steel.

“Bang! Bang! Bang!”

The figures of the fighters looked like blurs of light, barely touching the bed of broken amethyst pieces. The dust swirling around was taking shapes of fists as Ye Wei, and Tu Fusheng exchanged blows. The loud rumbles shook hearts and the impacted waves rippled. All the audience, at ground level and above, were becoming nervous.

Under the widened eyes of many, Ye Wei and Tu Fusheng exchanged over a couple hundreds of blows within seconds. Both sides had the power of nine-star condensed prime Warrior, and both could have died to one another’s aggressive attacks if they made one mistake.

Most of the experienced cultivators who thought the fight was over and expected Tu Fusheng to dominate Ye Wei. Once his power exponentially exploded, but they were now shocked to see Ye Wei had the capability to match his opponent’s intensity.

They had no choice but once again admit Ye Wei was stronger than they had expected.

“These two young ones are incredibly powerful!” Most of the audience on the cloud platform exclaimed as the fight became something like a death match between a lion and a panther.

“Bang! Bang!”

The raging energy from both contestants exploded in the air and cracked like thunder.

Countless nervous gazes were aimed at the epicenter where the impact had caused an actual storm. The crushing gusts were strong enough to tear condensed prime Warriors to pieces.

“Bang!”

The two figures met mid-air. With this exchange of violence came a rippling force-wave that shook the whole mountain, Ye Wei and Tu Fusheng flew backward. After a series of clumsy staggering both regained balance.

Though the fight was unforgiving, neither Ye Wei or Tu Fusheng were showing signs of backing down. They were both ready to answer their opponent's next strike even meant it would be their last.

“How is this possible? How can you last this long in my ghost freeze zone!?” Tu Fusheng's face darkened. His specialty technique traps whoever is stuck in the zone with power from the spirit realm while at the same time draining their energy. He did not expect Ye Wei would stay strong and have his amplification stance last this long under the pressure.

“I can't let this go on any longer!” Yu Fusheng by grinding his teeth showed his frustration. He understood the longer the fight lasted, the more he risked blowing his human cover. “No matter what stance you are capable of using you are no match for me!” His green eyes stared at Ye Wei. His killing intent intensified. Then his hands danced in the air at lightning speed as he made one hand seal after another.

As Tu Fusheng made countless hand seals, his heart raced, his blood flowed through his body like an overflowing river, rumbling as the live fluid circled through.

The green light burst out from the platform like waves. The light resonated with the primal energy in the atmosphere from a hundred kilometers radius. Thus, the two forces surged together and expanded.

Faintly an image of a demon could be seen in Tu Fusheng's eyes; it was the shape of his real demon form.

The image was also green, and somehow it showed no signs of being alive. Nonetheless, the image was still threatening.

Tu Fusheng was a corpse demon. These demons are the most mysterious species out of the six biggest demon clans. They are capable of harvesting the negative energy of death and utilizing that energy in combat. In turn, they use the void's power to stun and silence their human prey.

Within the green light, a black stone tablet appeared above Tu Fusheng, a dark presence of death grew and drowned the mountaintop.

All members of the audience began to have trouble breathing as if there were heavy rocks sitting on their chest.

"Eh?"

Ye Wei, who was the closest to Tu Fusheng, felt a strange sensation. His body was becoming weightless, and it was becoming harder for him to think. His soul started drifting away.

Ye Wei consciousness then began to sway; his head became heavy, and it was increasingly hard for him to stay sharp.

"Damn it!"

Ye Wei realized his situation was worsening, bit his tongue in hopes that the intense pain will wake himself up. However it was proven to be useless, his eyelids were becoming heavier, and his consciousness was becoming blurrier.

"I can engulf mankind's souls, and you are too weak to get away from me! Now face your death insolent human!" Tu Fusheng smiled sinisterly. His figure turned into a green flash and shot towards Ye Wei while he lifted his fist.

"What's happening?! Ye Wei does not look well; this is not natural!" City Lord Chen Yuan's eyes lit up. He was the first to notice the abnormality.

"What kind of technique is that? Ye Wei looks startled as if his soul is leaving his body! And, Tu Fusheng's punch is possibly strong enough to challenge a nine-star condensed prime Warrior. This is not good!" Shi Qing, the Green Army commander, displayed a horrified expression. It would be a disaster for humanity if either of the youngsters lost his life fighting.

"Hahaha! Die!" Tu Fusheng radiated a green light. The black stone tablet above him rattled. His bloodthirsty smile made his appearance even more sinister.

"No!" Ye Wei's consciousness began to fade, but he was still able to analyze the situation he was in, he could see Tu Fusheng's fist closing in.

With Tu Fusheng's soul constriction, Ye Wei did not have the energy to channel his Qi. He could only watch with despair as the fist closed in.

"Zoom! Zoom! Zoom!"

Staring at death, Ye Wei remembered what he had learned from the Karma tower when he fought the inner demons.

'With my heart, I shall master the way of the universe; with my heart, I will calm my mind. I will cultivate my mind and control my heart with my mind!' As his emotions calmed down, he was able to stabilize his soul, stopping its detached motion.

Ye Wei's eyes widened. His golden will-force rushed out from his Sentient, forming the shape of the holy conservatory. A glint of sacred light burst from inside his pupils shone onto Tu Fusheng.

Like the first light of the sun, the holy conservatory's bright golden light

shone and replaced the dark, green energy Tu Fusheng spread all over the mountaintop.

Beams of the golden light landed on Tu Fusheng's body and began to melt his skin and flesh. He squealed as the excruciating pain intensified, consuming him.

Ever since Ye Wei became a runemaster, his enchanted will-force was a counter to demons , and this was the second time he had a chance to show it.

Although Tu Fusheng's body was disintegrating, he did not back down. Rather, he continued advancing towards Ye Wei with his menacing fist strike.

'Selenic Triple-Primal Sword!'

"Swoosh! Swoosh!"

When Tu Fusheng's fist was three inches away from Ye Wei's head, a burst of runes stopped the sharp Qi wave from hitting Ye Wei's face.

The runes began to flow. An array of stars appeared in front of Ye Wei's suppressed body. They intertwined to become a ten meters long spectral sword.

What Tu Fusheng thought to be his opponent's final moments, Ye Wei was able to activate the mid-level Myst stance in its peak high-level, refined form.

Ye Wei's will-force and Qi rushed out like a flash flood. Under the effect of the Supernova second evolution, the Selenic Triple Sword stance drained his resources regardless of his amplified cultivation.

The spectral sword vibrated. The edge's glint resembled a starry night sky, and its energy was directed towards Tu Fusheng's direction.

The fist that was powering towards Ye Wei's head had suddenly stopped. It appeared, three inches between the fighters, there was an invisible and invulnerable wall hindering Tu Fusheng.

"Bang!"

The star-like runes conveyed their energy and exploded. Consequently, the amethyst platform turned into a mist of purple dust, shrouding the fighters entirely.

The audience on the cloud, who understood the scale of destruction and the power required to create such devastation, gasped because they realized Ye Wei could defeat them in a bare-hand fight.

Seeing Ye Wei had become the aggressor now, they all shifted their attention to Tu Fusheng, wondering if he could take the hit.

“Argh!” Tu Fusheng’s face became pale. He screamed in pain, tortured by the agony of his skin and muscles peeling off his bones.

‘Back!’ Tu Fusheng horrified tried desperately escaping. He wanted to dodge all the rippling force-waves of Ye Wei’s stance. Even though he was flying through the air at an incredible speed, he could not shake the waves behind his figure.

“What chances do you have now?” Ye Wei coldly questioned. He grabbed his sword and prepared to strike the next strike.

“Damn it, you filthy human child!” Tu Fusheng cursed desperately while considering if he should transform into his demon form so that he could defend himself. However, he knew doing so would make him the target of all the great human cultivators on the cloud platform and those below them.

“You left me with no choice! I will bring you down even if that means risking my life!” Tu Fusheng glared at Ye Wei with an eviscerating gaze. The green glow in the demon’s eyes brightened as his voice became hoarse.

“Kerrrrrr!” A strange vibrating noise came out of the demon’s widening mouth as the rest of his body expanded rapidly. Tu Fusheng lifted his head and screamed.

Chapter 153: Demon King

“Bang! Bang! Bang!”

Tu Fusheng’s rapidly enlarging body ripped his clothes into pieces. Under the audience’s awe, his face inhumanly contorted while the widened eyes of the shocked cultivators, old and young, watched the horrifying scene unveil itself.

The monstrous six meters tall body was muscular. His skin turned from a bronze coloration to a pale white. Two fearsome cyan fangs stuck out of his gigantic mouth.

“It’s a demon!”

“A Corpse demon!” The audience on the cloud stood up surprised, terrified by the fanged, towering, levitating abomination.

“You have some guts to reveal your demon form in my city!” Chen Yuan City Lord slammed the table in front of him, dissipating the cloud structure around him as he channeled his energy.

“A pathetic young demon like you should not have wandered into human territory. You should respect the Green Army and think about the consequences before you reveal your demon form!” Commander Shi Qing’s presence expanded, and he was surrounded by a blood red aura.

“Tu Fusheng is a... a demon!?” The audience on ground level were startled. They all felt a chill run down their spines, and their knees went weak. They struggled to accept that the young cultivator they’ve grown to like was a sinister being who infiltrated the tournament.

“No wonder his body strength is so exceptional!” Xu He’s forehead became wet from sweating and questioned himself on why he was not able to make the association before.

All present wholeheartedly believed demons would never dare to show themselves around Ning City, especially ever since the Battle of the Trapped Beasts.

“Do you have a death wish? This is human territory! If you reveal your

demon form, you won't just be fighting me!" Ye Wei held his sword tight, looked around him then struck Tu Fusheng with his sword.

"Bang! Bang!"

Ye Wei's sword left a trail resembling the milky way. He nearly blinded the audience as it came crashing down on Tu Fusheng's head.

The peak high-level Myst stance's power erupted, but at the same time draining all of Ye Wei's will-force and Qi.

Although Tu Fusheng transformed to his demon form, he was still not sure if he could handle the sword strike. His body glowed black to summon the spirits from the other side to attack Ye Wei.

While the spirits were slowing Ye Wei's sword strike down, Commander Shi Qing made a move. He used a stance to transform himself into a giant gold-armored war golem. Grabbing Tu Fusheng's body, he held it in place. "How dare you disrespect an army commander!?"

"Pall demon king, please help me, quick!" Tu Fusheng did not expect Shi Qing's swift reaction. He desperately screamed for help as he felt his life under threat.

"Bang!" While the Green Army commander's large golden palm strike was falling down onto Tu Fusheng, a jade pendant hanging on the demon's neck turned into dust, activating the teleportation device within.

Suddenly, a vortex appeared in the sky, and a large black palm, over a kilometer in length, stretched out of the dimension's opening. It pressed downwards towards the gold war golem, and covering the sky. Nobody on the mountaintop could see the sun.

The patterns on the pall demon king's hand were carved deep into his onyx textured skin, resembling the green shapes on Tu Fusheng's skin. Black mist formed between the fingers of the over-sized hand

The commander, in his war golem runic armor was shakened and knocked back by the pressure. At the same time, the large fingers of the demon king's other hand collapsed on Ye Wei's Selenic Sword stance and broke it into shards.

“Crack!”

Ye Wei’s face turned pale. He spat out a mouthful of blood as he fell rapidly towards the ground. With his Qi sword broken, his weakened body’s anchor, he lost all of his strength.

“I am impressed, you are just a teenage boy, but you would have defeated a green corpse demon singlehandedly if I did not intervene. I apologize but I cannot let you live.” A dark, hoarse voice sounded, shook the mountaintop, and the demon’s gigantic hand smashed towards Ye Wei.

“Pall demon king, know your place!” Commander Shi Qing shouted furiously. His voice roared like thunder.

A burst of energy exploded from the commander’s body. His golden fist tore through the thickened air, hoping to knock the black hand that was on the course to annihilate Ye Wei away.

“Boom!”

Countless of runes were flowing on the surface of the golden fist. The air close to the impact compressed and then exploded. The shining runes illuminated like the sun, and everyone at the scene closed their eyes not to become blind.

Only a few were unaffected by the side effects of the returned prime Warrior’s powerful strike.

“Do you really think we will just sit here and watch you kill a young talent in our territory?” The City Lord joined in without hesitation. A dark long sword appeared in his grip out of nowhere.

The next second the City Lord’s blade flew towards the vortex where the demon king’s hand came from.

“Hahaha! Chen Yuan, Shi Qing, good day to you too! And, may I say that you two are way too slow?” The demon king’s hoarse voice crackled and resounded all throughout the arena, knocking many unconscious.

“Too late!”

Although both the commander's golden fist and the City Lord's sword strike were swift, their speed were no match to the rampaging black palm strike.

Distressed by the demon king's motive and his merciless execution, the two strongest cultivators shivered since they knew Ye Wei would be crushed within moments.

Before contact, the fearsome pressure imposed by the black palm already began to dismantle Ye Wei's body from the inside. His veins ruptured, and he bled out from the fissures all over his skin.

While his skin was splitting, and his muscles were tearing, the runic energy on his bones seemed to have its own mind. The rune pattern flowed rapidly; the spaced out tadpole shapes melted into each other due to the pressure.

Catalyzed by the force of the demon king, the runes on Ye Wei's bones consolidated and grew into connected ying yang shapes.

Ye Wei knew how talented he was, but even so he concluded that it will take more than ten years of training and painful process of altering and modifying the runes on his bones before reaching the third stage.

However under the demon's pressure, the runes on Ye Wei's bones were forcefully empowered with the speed thousand times quicker than he had ever expected.

Ye Wei stared at the demon king who stretched out from the black void in the sky. He shook his head reluctantly.

'I can't wait any longer,' he thought. He could feel most of the runes on his bones were compressed, and the runic transformation was close to finishing, 'if I don't succeed and withstand my ground now, I will get killed by the black palm!'

A sudden flash of inspiration filled his mind.

Ye Wei breathed a sigh of relief as his iron talisman hanging on his waist this whole time, suddenly came to life. Its energy bursted out and became million of strands of silver lights, filling all the space around

him. It formed an invisible force field that instantly enveloped and stopped the demon king's black palm.

The black palm froze abruptly in space; not a single muscle could move or even twitch.

The talisman Ye Wei found in the Bloodmist valley was not mystic arms, but it was more powerful than one. Once it absorbed enough power, it could create a force field strong enough to freeze a demon king's full-force strike. Although it was not a pretty or fancy piece of jewelry, its power had just turned the tide.

Ye Wei had found it three years ago during which he had only used it three times. After every use, the talisman needs more and more energy to restore itself. Unless it was absolutely the last resort, Ye Wei was not willing to use it. Having accumulated so much energy, the scale of the force-field released by it was never before seen.

Before today, his iron talisman was his best kept secret weapon. But being in a life or death situation, there was only so much Ye Wei could do than not taking advantage of the talisman's hidden power.

"What? What just happened?!" A muffled hoarse voice angrily asked. The demon king was completely shocked as his hand was firmly held in place by a mysterious force.

The strength of the demon king was far superior to anyone present, however, the iron talisman was able to stop him for a few decisive moments. Although it could only hold the demon's strike for a second, that one second was all that was needed.

By the time the demon king broke the talisman's constricting power, City Lord Chen Yuan's black blade, with the momentum like a meteor, decisively cut the huge demon's arm.

The demon king's voice howled within the nether. Even he was shocked by the sudden powerful energy, since he did not expect anyone to be able to stop his attack.

A dull crush noise echoed from the impact. An invisible force wave

rippled outwards, knocking everyone down. Though they were standing on the outside of the protective shield made by the City Lord, their bodies weakened and their faces became pale.

The gusts of wind around the martial platforms intensified.

“I shall spare your lives this time, mortals!” In agony, the demon king’s wounded voice growled from above. Without his real body, he could tell that he would be defeated shortly now that his initiative had been stopped. There was no chance for him to end Ye Wei’s life this time, “Goodbye, mortals!”

The demon king roared to Tu Fusheng to run and hide himself within the void nether.

“You filthy creature! How dare you come to my city! You disrespect me by crossing the boundaries! And you wish to leave without any consequences?!” A mighty voice sounded above everyone’s heads. Chen Yuan was there to avenge the citizens.

“Don’t let him escape!” Yelled Chen Yuan as the sudden burst of energy exploded from his Black Sword.

The City Lord’s sword Qi heated up. The kilometer long body of energy became a tornado, and its fearsome pressure drowned out the whole mountain.

Chapter 154: Qing State's Seven

'Crazed River Blade!' Chen Yuan grunted. His cold face and bloodthirsty eyes conveyed his intent to kill the demon while his long black blade buried into the demon's tough, muscular flesh.

"Boom!"

As the City Lord stuck his stance to the Qi tornado, the compressed air-whirl transformed into a sword shape.

"Chen Yuan, when did you learn how to use Supreme Chen Feng's Void Cleve!?" The demon king's voice furiously echoed into the human realm from the other end of the nether. The demon king figured out why the mortal being could cut off his arm, "You better leave my kins alone! Otherwise, I will make sure your people die together with mine!"

The demon's voice faded while his broken arm on the ground suddenly started pulsing. Scarlet light burst out of the detached limb; every drop of demon blood began to ignite, emitting fearsome energy.

"Watch out! He is using his necromancy powers! The arm is going to explode!" Chen Yuan yelled in shock. He dismissed his Qi blade in order to free up his hands, enabling him to make runic seals.

He didn't want to let Tu Fusheng escape. Nonetheless, he couldn't let the arm explode since it would lead to numerous combustions that the younger cultivators had no chance to survive.

In this situation Chen Yuan only saw one correct course of action, to prevent the explosion from taking place by all means necessary.

Not only did the City Lord, but the rest of the powerful cultivators on the cloud platform agreed as well. They all decided to use suppressing stances against the demon's broken limb.

"Boom! Boom! Boom!"

The arm exploded without warning and sent pieces of flesh and blood all over the nearby young cultivators. These pieces incinerated their skin and turned their bones to dust. Fortunately, Chen Yuan suppressed the

true might of the outburst, saving numerous lives, otherwise the consequences would have been disastrous.

“Demon king! We will meet again soon, and next time I will kill you both!” Chen Yuan shouted. The demon took Tu Fusheng and vanished, only his lingering laughter could be heard from the wind.

The tournament ground became chaotic. All of the audience was startled by the bloody scene. The ones who stood closer to the explosion could not believe their friends were now dead and in pieces. They were stunned by the sudden demonic assault, but at the same time, they felt lucky that the explosions were contained.

Chen Yuan looked at the remains of the void where the demon king and Tu Fusheng disappeared, frowning.

“I now declare Ning City in a state of emergency due to demon infiltration! I want everyone from the Seven Star School who had contact with Tu Fusheng arrested and interrogated immediately!” Ordered Chen Yuan in a cold voice. ‘Usually demon’s disguised as human beings are easily detected by teacher or even stronger students. This time however, Tu Fusheng was before their eyes for a very long period of time undetected. It is definitely a matter to worry about. Maybe they have mastered better disguise methods.’

The city guards proceeded without hesitation. They hastefully took Seven Star School’s tutors and students in custody. One by one, they were interrogated. The officials found out Tu Fusheng had a mysterious female associate who happened to disappear around the same time the fight between South Star and Seven Star ended in bloodshed. A number of scouts were sent to track the young girl’s whereabouts.

The chaos of the earlier events slowly began to calm down. Ye Wei was sent to the medics by the City Lord to make sure that all of his grievous injuries would be attended.

The guards of the Ning City began to search for traces of demons within the city’s walls.

Thousand of miles away, in a huge mysterious cave hidden beneath the mountains, Tu Fusheng was kneeling on the trembling ground before an enormous dark mass of sinister energy that levitated. This sinister energy began to reflect the ghostly glow radiated from the stones in the cave.

“You insolent creature! You almost ruined my plans! You should have practiced the Empowering Technique instead of wasting your time!” A loud grunt echoed in the dark as a surge of negative energy span around Tu Fusheng, ready to harvest his life.

Tu Fusheng felt the demonic force spirals’ hostility, and his whole body was turned rigid by fear. Scared, but trying to stop his voice from trembling: “Thank you, Demon king, for your gracious mercy!”

The cluster of dark clouds gathered and dissipated slowly over and over, creating runic patterns that shown a dark light onto the demon king’s body.

A deep thought crossed Tu Fusheng’s mind while seeing the presence of the complex runic patterns. Only human beings are capable of writing, ‘Maybe the Pall Demon king was human once before! I heard rumors that he was one of the few humans that used ancient spells to transform into a demon...’

“Please, teach me how to use the empowerment technique! I am willing to work as hard as I can to improve so I can finish the task! I promise, I will not let you down again!” Tu Fusheng exclaimed anxiously.

“Save your excuses, I sent little Yin to finish what you failed to do. I have another small task for you, you pathetic joke. If you fail me again, this time there will be consequences!” The Demon king spoke and let out a heavy, low grunt.

The loud rumble made Tu Fusheng’s ears bleed. He knew he was in no position to negotiate or to argue, “Your wish is my command, Your Grace!” He hid his insecurities, but secretly he felt envious that the demon king sent someone else to finish what he started.

After receiving his new instructions, Tu Fusheng carefully left the cave mindful to not turn his back to the demon king while exiting.

The black mist suddenly became unstable after Tu Fusheng left the cave, “Chen Yuan, I will not let this go! When I am finished with preparing the ancient moon corpse technique, I will annihilate Ning City and cover its ground with dead bodies! Hahaha!”

As the demon king laughed hysterically, a pool of blood started bubbling out of the ground, and a human corpse emerged.

It was a completely naked corpse of a handsome young man. His hair was black and long, and his facial features were well defined and proportional. There was a tenderness in his masculinity and a hint of wittiness.

The body was in perfect shape. His hair was perfectly glossy, and his nose was straight as a gangplank. His smooth skin and thin lips appeared slightly pink, delicate like a young girl.

He was laying in a pool of blood. His dim grey eyes slightly open, showing great sadness.

It's impossible to find out everything the young man experienced in his life; however, there was grief and hopelessness in his eyes.

The demon king had acquired this ancient corpse from the wild wilderness. It's soul had long since faded away, but the body was in perfect condition. It seemed to have collected a mass amount of spirits and negative energy due to its violent death. If the demon king would be able to integrate himself into this ancient corpse, he would have the chance to become a demon sovereign or even a demon emperor.

The City Lord's mansion, Ning City.

Gravely injured, Ye Wei finally started to wake up after extensive care of several nurses.

A slim, beautiful maid was hovering over Ye Wei when he opened his eyes at last. “Little one, are you awake? How do you feel?” she worryingly asked she.

“Where... Where am I?” Ye Wei asked in a weak barely audible voice, staring blindly at the nurse.

“You are at the City Lord’s mansion, his grace sent you here for us to attend your injuries.” She smiled gently, still a bit worried about Ye Wei’s condition.

Pictures of his memory started to appear in his mind. The Demon king and his mighty attacks, the talisman, how he was able to freeze the demon’s arm, Chen Yuan’s efforts of bravely fighting to defend the youngsters. Ye Wei’s heart filled with gratitude towards the City Lord, ‘if it wasn’t for him, I would be dead by now, crushed by the demon’s arm.’

“That Demon King held such immense power.” Ye Wei was terribly shaken. He remembered the fight and tried not to show how scared he actually felt. His body seemed to be healing; however, his Sentient was full of scars.

Ye Wei suddenly sat up straight. The blanket covering his body slipped, revealing his naked body. His cheeks flushed red and he hurried to cover himself up again.

Seeing how embarrassed Ye Wei was acting, the maids couldn’t help but chuckle, “don’t be shy, we have been taking care of you for days now. We have already seen everything.” she said playfully.

Hearing the words of the maid, Ye Wei felt even more flustered. ‘You can’t be serious. Was I in coma for that long?’

He looked down at his completely naked body under the blanket to double check. His cheeks now looked like a pair of tomatoes.

“Would you mind leaving the room for a moment so I can dress myself appropriately!” Ye Wei could still not get over his embarrassment.

“Yes sir, we will be on our way now!” The prettiest of them spoke, bowed, and closed the door behind her after leaving Ye Wei alone in the comfortable, spacious room.

Ye Wei took a deep breath. He was relieved as his eyes followed the beautiful maids out of the room. He was not at all comfortable with how

the maids saw his naked body. He sighed and then began to check his body, only to discover his meridians were partially blocked and his Sentient was cracked. All in all, he was not in good enough condition to cultivate or train.

He took a few pills and began to nourish his body with the medicines' effect. After a few moments, he was feeling a lot better. However, his Sentient injuries were still not resolved.

Ye Wei heard rapid footsteps from the outside while he was trying to cultivate. He wanted to get the best out from the pills.

Led by City Lord Chen Yuan and commander Shi Qing, a group of people burst into his room, including Xu He, Cao Ning and other related personae.

"Ye Wei! How are you feeling?!" Cao Ning's concerned voices sounded from the door as he rushed in to see if his friend was recovering well.

"I'm alright. A few injuries, but nothing too serious." Ye Wei calmly answered. Ensuring, he sounded as energetic as he could.

"I did not expect Tu Fusheng to be an infiltrated demon. I don't think anyone understood this fact until the very last moment. It is our duty to protect all the citizens and guests of this City, and we failed. But I am glad that you are alright!" Chen Yuan sighed sadly. Blaming himself for not noticing this demon invasion earlier, he handed a pill bottle to Ye Wei, "These are two Sunfire pills. They can heal injured meridians and provide a Qi boost. I assume you might have some use for them.

"I owe my life to you and all the City protectors, as well as the people who looked after me here. I do not dare to accept any more gifts from you, Lord." Ye Wei quickly replied, impressed by the extraordinary generosity of the City Lord.

Chen Yuan smiled, touched by Ye Wei's modesty, "It's only two pills. You have way more need for them right now than me."

"I would find it offensive if you didn't accept my gift." said the City Lord. Only then, Ye Wei bowed to Chen Yuan and accepted the valuable

pills, "Thank you so much for your help!"

'These are two Sunfire pills. My meridians will be able to heal and fully recover and perhaps even improve my cultivation. Nevertheless, the Sentient injuries there is nothing much I can do, but just to take it easy and slowly recuperate.'

"The tournament is officially over! We finished first and even were granted a special reward from the City Lord. Lord Chen Yuan awarded us a plaque with handwritten inscription!" Said Xu He, looking proudly at Ye Wei. This was South Star Academy's best finish ever in the history of the school's participation in the tournament. Without Ye Wei, they would have never had a chance.

"Our school was also rewarded with the prestigious «College» title in addition to a bunch of new stances, prizes and money. Southern Star will be able to provide so much more for their students!"

Ye Wei nodded, and a smile grew larger on his face. He could not help but feel happy and extremely proud for his school.

"This is a frozen iron body armor for when you defeated Tu Fusheng. Defeating that filthy demon, you became the highest ranked God's Seven! There this belongs to you." Chen Yuan spoke as he took the silvery item out of his interspatial bag and handed it over to Ye Wei.

"You've already given me two valuable pills, how can I take more from you?" Ye Wei lifted his hand to refuse the City Lord's offer.

"Didn't you hear? This is not a gift for you specifically. It is tradition and custom that the strongest God's Seven own this piece of armor!" The City Lord laughed, "Well, I would have personally given you something for protection otherwise! Hahaha! On a serious note, you should always be wearing this armor, it can save your life!"

Ye Wei nodded. 'Since all of the God's Seven were awarded with this armor, I cannot refuse', Ye Wei thought to himself as he took the armor. Upon contact with the armor, he felt a cold chill passing his finger, which flowed through his whole body. The armor, made of cold iron cast, was greatly sophisticated and extremely hard to penetrate or broken even by

returned prime Warriors.

“Ye Wei, are you interested in joining the Green Army?” Commander Shi Qing, who stood on the side. He had no patience left in him. “You and your family will be protected, and the army will provide you will all kinds of resources you need for training!”

Listening to this proposal, Chen Yuan couldn't help but started laughing. “Commander, I fear that you will be disappointed. Ye Wei has already joined Runemaster Union and is a three star Runemaster, approved to become one of the Seven New Runes!”

“Runemaster? God's Seven?!” The Commander was startled. Even though the army provided a lot of benefits for the troops,he knew his offer couldn't interest a Runemaster.

“Three star Runemaster?! The first of God's Seven?” Xu He and others also looked shocked. Cao Ning, Joe Yin and Liu Jian stared at Ye Wei, stunned by the sudden news.

“He is so young! Only our age and already achieved this much!”

“Unbelievable!”

Chapter 155: Vermillion Essence Runes

Joe Yin understood Ye Wei was drifting further and further away from her. Nonetheless, she did not expect it to be so soon, to happen this quickly. She tried to remain positive and quietly wished Ye Wei the best in his future endeavours.

Commander Shi was feeling slightly embarrassed. He rubbed his nose and said, "I've got another idea. We have a few special openings for honorable instructors. I personally know some runemasters who took the offer. You don't have to do a lot. Rather, you just have to come and tutor the troops now and then. We offer our instructors great wages and benefits too."

"Instructor? I am not sure. Will it be appropriate for my age?" Ye Wei felt a little bit embarrassed by all the attention he was getting.

Commander Shi chuckled "What do you mean?! It will be perfect! It is not at all inappropriate considering your cultivation level. Furthermore, you are already a three-star Runemaster! You have more than enough knowledge to teach those young bastards!" He was admiring young Ye Wei's accomplishments. 'Maybe one day, this kid will become a leader! I need to stay in good relationship with him.' he thought.

"It would be disrespectful if I declined an offer from the Commander himself!" Ye Wei smiled shyly.

"Apart from a fixed salary, the Green Army gives their honorable instructors each a silver token. This token gives them clearance to command troops wherever they are." The commander then explained the obligation Ye Wei was expected to follow. He could obtain higher leveled tokens if he was promoted. The Commander also explained what clearance yellow tokens, black tokens or even the renowned purple tokens would grant.

Each token has different authorization levels and functions. Only a handful of people were in possession of purple tokens in the whole of Green Army.

“What are you going to do now, Ye Wei? Will you go back to Green Moon City?” Asked Chen Yuan while he examined Ye Wei’s face. Even though Ye Wei was more than qualified to enter the next stage of the tournament at Qing state’s capital, he was already crowned the number one of God’s Seven, a three star Runemaster and a Green Army instructor, attending the next tournament would not help him achieve much.

“You deserve a larger stage than what the state-wide tournament has to offer...”

Ye Wei, however, was determined to meet his master and family as soon as possible, ‘I definitely want to go back to Green Moon City! Even though I do not plan to spend my entire life there, I need to meet with my Master first, then we will travel together to Qing State’s capital through a transportation array!’

Chen Yuan was silent for a moment worried about the dangers that might have been waiting on the other side of the city’s wall. He nodded and said: “If this is what you wish to do, you need to be careful! Even though the demon king was injured and he probably won’t dare to cross the boundaries any time soon, he is still dangerous and he will be looking for you, seeking revenge.”

“Thank you, Lord, for your concerns.” Ye Wei responded thankfully and thought, ‘as of now, there are more demons wandering in human territory than usual as Ziyang said. I have to quickly improve my cultivation for the sake of my own safety and also for the people around me, people that I care about.’

Ye Wei suddenly remembered something he read while browsing the Runemaster Union’s inventory using his runic badge, ‘I think I should try to get my hands on deception scrolls. With those specialized mystic scrolls it will be much easier to hide my tracks, but they cost three hundred thousand contribution tokens each! I have to think of ways to earn more tokens quickly and efficiently.’

“You don’t need to hurry home. I can arrange for you to stay here for a few days, so you can rest and gain strength before going on the road

again. Once all of the other students returned to where they came from, I can send my men to escort you back to Green Moon City. Just for safety!" Said Chen Yuan sincerely while looking at Xu He and the South Star team.

"Thank you, Lord, that would be very kind of you." Xu He quickly expressed his appreciation and bowed.

"Ye Wei, you should get some rest! We will leave you be!" Everyone started to back out from the room, giving the weakened runemaster space.

Ye Wei, finally alone in his room, sat himself comfortably in lotus position, swallowed one of the two Sunfire pills given to him by the City Lord and began to cultivate.

A surge of scorching energy flowed down his throat, absorbed, it entered his meridians, spreading across his entire body. He felt like he swallowed burning magma. One by one, the blockages on his meridians were slowly unclogged by the heat.

'This Sunfire pill is unbelievably good!'

Ye Wei thought that after mending his meridians he could make good use of the residual energy from the pill, and that he should channel the heat into his dantian where the energy will eventually be absorbed, becoming his own.

Half an hour later all the energy of the pill ceased to exist in his meridians. He did a well converting the surges as they reached his dantian.

Like a needle dropped in a haystack, no trace of energy could be found.

Ye Wei was shocked, dumbfounded. He originally thought that one Sunfire Pill would be greatly beneficial, that it would be enough to enhance his cultivation and fill his dantian with much needed Qi. Ye Wei came to the conclusion that the pill was ineffective because he was oblivious about his dantian being over-sized comparing to other cultivators at his level, that it required an absurd amount of energy to fill up. Hence the effect of the sunfire pill wasn't noticeable in Ye Wei's case.

Ye Wei swallowed another Sunfire pill. This time he took more time to refine the pill's energy, therefore he accumulated a little bit more Qi.

"It seems that one or two sunfire pills have no effect on me and soon I will require more and more pills to be able to sustain my dantian. The perfect solution would be Cosmic energy but it's not so simple to obtain. I can refine low level stances but the cosmic energy received from them would be minimal. I need to refine higher level's stances to be able to obtain the needed energy", murmured Ye Wei angrily.

'The meridians were restored, but my fractured Sentient will need much more time to heal... But there might still be powerful demons around the city, I am never safe until completely recovered from my injuries.'

Even though Ye Wei's Sentient was slowly healing it was still not quick enough, and it was very difficult to get pills that would have any effect on fractured Sentients, even the mighty City Lord himself did not possess anything that like it.

'Oh, maybe I can get it from the Runemaster Union's inventory!' The idea flashed across Ye Wei's mind. He quickly took the Runic Badge out from his bag and began to look for the pills that could aid his current condition.

"Condense Soul pill, Nourish Soul pill, Holy Spirit pill... This is it!" Ye Wei found the category he needed, he looked at the description and figured out his Sentient injury could be healed by just a Condense Soul pill, the more expensive options were meant for cultivators with more dire injuries. He then checked the cost of the item he needed, gasped for air in shock as he found out just one pill will cost him three hundred thousand contribution tokens.

The pill that helps to restore a fractured Sentient was quite rare, as it required a large amount of unique and limited herbs. In addition, these pills usually had no harmful side effects, hence why their value was so high. Condense Soul pill costed three hundred thousand contribution tokens; while the Nourish Soul pill five hundred thousand contribution tokens; and the Holy Spirit pill at six million contribution tokens.

If a Holy Spirit pill is available for a cultivator to take before a large battle or even a war, the Sentient will gain extraordinary strength, making it almost impossible to break. Unfortunately the pill is too expensive, out of Ye Wei's reach for now.

'I need to get some of these pills to restore my Sentient quicker, and also to recharge the iron talisman. It saved my life too many times to not have it prepared for another possible dangerous encounter.'

Thinking about the different ways to earn contribution tokens, Ye Wei remembered that he could try and answer some of the questions from the jade wall. The practical problems that rewarded well were unfortunately out of his reach, however he could try himself at theoretical questions. After answering just one question correctly, he already collected fifty thousand contribution tokens.

Ye Wei continued to flip the pages, looking for any question he would be able to try put his knowledge to good use, his eyes widened as one of the questions caught his attention.

"This couldn't be... Someone submitted a question with a reward of two hundred and ten million contribution tokens?!" Murmured Ye Wei, shocked by the amount of tokens he could get from just one question. "Who would have put it here..."

'It is actually a very simple question!' Surprise was all over Ye Wei's face, while he wondered what kind of people would be resourceful enough to offer that much.

'I can only see basic runes and seals in this rune sequence...' Surprised to find out what the question was on.

What Ye Wei didn't take into account is that the runes are way more profound and complicated. The pattern of certain runes can create a basic rune sequence, however every rune can be used differently according to how you pair them together. There were infinite amount of possibilities.

To become a Runemaster, one had to master the runic system, and learn how to make stances but to become a Grand-Runemaster, Runemasters would have to create their own runes, all runes as cultivators knew them,

were created by Sages and Grand-Runemasters after years or even decades of research.

Ye Wei looked worryingly at the question, checked every word to make sure he read it correctly.

‘In the ancient book of life, there were a total of sixty thousand runes... What were the seven vermilion essence runes mentioned in the volume? Prove your answer.’

Chapter 156: The First Rune

Ye Wei frowned, although the question seemed simple, he didn't know anything about the Vermilion Essence Runes, after all these seven runes were created, named and categorized in a system that he had minimal knowledge on.

Rumors had it that the seven Vermilion Essence Runes were created by a prime while observing the Mystic Mountain. He was surrounded by demons but managed to escape. He was gravely injured in the battle and didn't survive, but before he took his last breath, he managed to write down the seven Vermilion Essence Runes, inspired by the demons' strength.

The book he wrote in was the ancient book of life, that kept record of more than sixty thousand basic runes, contained more than ten million pages with detailed description of each rune and respective sequence. Looking for just seven runes in the sea of shapes was completely intangible task.

It was known, though, that the power of these seven essential runes were exceptional. They could greatly enhance any stance, thus making their significance truly remarkable, and therefore they meant a lot to the human race.

'I can read the whole volume from the badge, but I'm guessing it won't be simple to find seven specific runes from the large collection...' Ye Wei stared at the image of the book on top of the runic badge, caught in a deep thought.

'I can receive five million contribution tokens just for finding the first essence rune and proving its existence! The second one will grant me ten million contribution points! If I will be able to find them all I can receive a total of two hundred and ten million contribution tokens!'

Ye Wei was enthusiastic, but he was soon going to find out the difficulty of excuting this task, having to isolate seven runes from a pool of sixty thousand. The question had been listed on the fifty-sixth wall for sixty

years now. There were many Runemasters and Grand-Runemasters that read the book of life everyday for referencing purposes, who knew the existence of the question but none of them was able to answer it.

“Seven Vermilion Essence runes, where are you?” Ye Wei’s eyes were closed, dug deep into his mind, the Mystic Mount presence in his Sentient meant that he had an enormous library of runes in his head, but they were not necessarily arranged nor named.

Ye Wei was not particularly looking to find all seven, he was just interested in getting enough tokens to heal his Sentient, but the challenge itself was becoming interesting for him.

‘The question is – how do I identify them? How am I going to differentiate them from the rest?’ Ye Wei realized that it would take a lot of time and effort to study the runes and even then he would struggle to answer the question without a clear definition.

‘Maybe he left clues when he jotted the runes down...’

Ye Wei kept flipping through the pages, tried to search for clues, imagining where the creator of the runes would place the, trying to think alike.

‘The first of the seven... It shouldn’t be too far back in the book, right? Unless he didn’t want anyone to find it...’ Ye Wei was getting frustrated, and decided to take a closer look at the beginning chapters. He never thought looking at runes would be such a confusing thing to do.

Behind every existent rune there was an inspiration, they could be from other runes, nature or even philosophy.

Countless cultivators dedicated their life and wisdom on runes theory and its application. It was said that their effort, the stances and runes they created, would eventually become a part of enlarged Mystic Mount, in return, they would be given cosmic energy stored in the mountain that was now nowhere to be found.

Few pages into the book, Ye Wei was still struggling to identify anything even slightly related to what he was looking for. He could only find

description and record of a lot of basic runes that were used for low-level Spirit stances.

Ye Wei's hope was diminishing with the flip of each page.

'I cannot find anything...' Ye Wei thought sadly after looking through more than seven hundred runes. More than seven hundred runes were now deeply engraved in Ye Wei's mind, however there was still no trace of the vermilion essence runes.

"Seven vermilion essence runes, seven runes..." He murmured.

Ye Wei thought for a moment to continue searching through the pages. He wasn't someone who would give up easily. However, a thought crossed his mind, what if he would try to explore his mind and see if the Mystic Mount would be of any help, as any runes he sees or learns will be engraved in his mind forever. It was just a matter of getting to it.

Thousands of runes flashed in Ye Wei's mind. An idea quickly passed through but his mind was too slow to react to it, to get hold of the knowledge deep inside.

'It's still not enough!' Ye Wei thought in disdain and kept looking through the pages, trying to remember as many runes as he could. By the time he made another break from reading, he was able to learn eight thousand new runes.

The eight thousand runes continuously reassembled, sparks of inspiration and imagination rose and died, Ye Wei was drowning in this mysterious sensation. He didn't even notice that two days had passed.

The Mystic Mount presence suddenly shone bright gold, different combinations of small parts of the eight thousand runes throughout the first chapters had now formed seventy-six thousand low-level Spirit stances, Ye Wei was surprised to discover that there was a rune that repeated itself ten thousand times in the strongest stances that was formed in his head.

"This rune is very special!" Exclaimed Ye Wei, excited about what he discovered. He could see the energy within this rune was far more intense

than in an ordinary rune, and its simplicity doubled the stronger Spirit stances' effectiveness.

'Although only a basic rune, its effect is far from simple...' Ye Wei began to think that only an extremely skilled and experienced Grand-Runemaster could have created this.

Ye Wei was immediately overwhelmed by a rush of joy, feeling euphoric, certain that this rune was the first of the fabled seven, 'This makes sense right?' He began to feel tired. Even though his investigation was almost automated, his lack of sleep did not make his over-worked brain any more relaxed.

There were so many runes in the volume, making a huge amount of knowledge and persistence necessary if he wished to find the single right rune. Nonetheless he was able to find the first. To find the second, third and proceeding further would become increasingly difficult if he was to employ the same method, as the pool of runes he had to process would just keep increasing.

'I will send this in for now, and maybe revisit the question when I have time in the future!' Thought Ye Wei, while writing down in details how the rune he found was an intrinsic ingredient to many powerful stances.

The jade walls of questions had always been the focus of Runemasters across all dynasties, most of them would find themselves using it either to solve the problems they face while cultivating or they would use the walls as the main way of earning contribution tokens.

The more difficult the questions got, the less attention they eventually receive. People who bothered to check any of the walls Ye Wei was on were mainly Grand-Runemasters.

Over at Sky Flood dynasty, a few Grand-Runemasters gathered at the union's branch as they have been doing habitually for years, they were chatting over glasses of wine and one of them flipped over to the fifty-sixth jade wall's content.

"Have you seen this? Someone actually answered the question!" Exclaimed one of the Grand-Runemaster, surprised to see an answer to

the question for the first time in sixty years.

A lot of Runemasters tried to solve this problem as the reward for it was rather high, but for sixty years there was no one competent of doing so; nobody came remotely close to solving this question. Everyone assumed that it was put on the jade wall by someone incredibly powerful and it slowly turned to an enigma among the most powerful Grand-Runemasters.

It had been sixty years, but nobody ever found out who it was that listed such question.

“Are you kidding? How could this simple rune be one of the seven?”

“Look! There are some explanations!”

“What? Eight thousand stances? And this Runemaster arranged them into over seventy thousand stances? I mean it’s impressive that he or she went this far and found out that this one rune repeated itself in the stronger of stances... How long must it have taken? Ten years? I admire the dedication of doing such a repetitive project!”

They didn’t know that someone with a presence of Mystic Mount in his mind didn’t actually need to create his own stances but rather look through the knowledge already inside him, go through the original memories, which is much more easier than creating stances and runes from scratch.

“Haha, these seven runes... Some people think all of this is a myth, but if they do exist I guess it was worth this Runemaster’s effort and time! Just because we think it’s impossible, doesn’t mean others don’t have a way, right? I respect it if his answer proves itself to be correct!” The President of the dynasty’s union branch, Hu Yanzhuo paused to look at what Ye Wei wrote, and he began to realized the rune’s subtle but genius functions that had been ignored by the community for longer than he could care.

At the same moment another Runemaster exclaimed loudly.

“The person who answered the question already received the reward!”

His answer was accepted!”

“Are you certain? Well, that pretty much proves it! The person who was knowledgeable enough to post the question probably knows best, as he studied this subject thoroughly!”

“The first vermillion essence rune has been discovered! Should we try using the same system to find the other ones?”

“Forget about it! It probably took at least a decade for someone to learn eight thousand runes and go through all the Spirit stances to find the first vermillion essence rune! I am afraid that looking for the second rune will take double the time!”

Hu Yanzhuo could not check who posted the question but his clearance allowed him to check the identity of the union member who answer the questions from the jade wall.

“I am not sure I know who Master Ye is... “ murmured Hu Yanzhuo. “But if he was able to discover the first rune he must be a veteran.”

Hu Yanzhuo kept looking down to find out more about the mysterious Runemaster “He is sixteen years old and three star Runemaster?! What is this madness, is someone using him as a middleman?” He couldn’t believe that someone who just discovered the first vermillion essence rune was a young boy!

“Are you sure mister President? There must be some kind of a mistake? How could a sixteen year old...” “ The Grand-Runemasters stared at each other in awe.

At around the same time, the branch president of the Sacred Snow dynasty, Yang Shuo also learned the news.

“Ye Wei... This Ye Wei Kid again? God! He found a vermilion rune!? Who the hell is he?” Yang Shou was completely shocked by the answer he was reading: ‘How can a teenage boy managed to do something that would take a Grand-Runemaster at least a decade to achieve...’

The president quickly dismissed the possibilities of any mistakes being made regarding the authenticity of the small essay Ye Wei wrote as he

saw the transaction confirmation. 'I don't see a problem in his proving method and he just earned five million tokens... This is unbelievable! I think we will have a very young new leader in the union soon!' The thought sent a shiver down the president's spine.

Everyone in the Runemaster Union across the lands were talking about this breaking news, that someone was finally able to give the correct answer to a high profile question on the jade wall.

Chapter 157: Exchange

Ye Wei couldn't even imagine how big of an impact his answer made. In every Runemaster Union's branch, Runemasters and Grand-Runemasters gathered together to discuss this news. The word spread quickly from city to city and even from region to region. The name of Ye Wei was in everyone's minds and on everyone's lips.

"This fellow Runemaster Ye Wei possesses great amount of knowledge! If the opportunity comes up, we should definitely ask him for some advices!" A group of Runemasters were discussing the recent news through their badges.

"This question was on the jade wall for so many years and no one was able to solve it. After this breakthrough, someone will eventually be able to find all seven vermillion essence runes left by the Vermilion Emperor!? Do you think the rumor is true regarding the powerful stance these seven runes together would make?"

"I am not sure that this Ye Wei will be able to find the second rune so easily."

"I wish I would be able to solve this problem, but it would require so much time to learn all the runes from the book, to go through each one of them. Just to find the first one it probably took almost ten years. The second one will be even harder and more time consuming!"

"Maybe Ye Wei has a different method? Maybe he found another way? We need to just wait and see."

"Zhou dynasty? That is like, the countryside? That is the last place I would expect to see a skilled Runemaster... I heard that there are only a handful of Grand-Runemasters are based there."

"Well, have you forgotten about the Black Cloud dynasty? It was less developed than Zhou dynasty is now, before that person surfaced, and now that place is swarmed by Grand-Runemasters, it is basically the capital of Runemasters..."

“The younger generation of Runemasters is really talented, aren’t they?”

Ye Wei was not aware of all the talks, confusion and excitement that were going on around his newfound fame and the answer submitted by him. He was more delighted with the reward that he got from finding just one rune.

‘What can I buy with five million contribution tokens?’

‘It is not enough for me to get the powerful stances, formulas... Damn, not even these pills... I need more contribution tokens!’ Ye Wei was not interested in things on the list that he could afford.

‘First, I should probably spent my contribution tokens on Nourish Soul pills as they only cost five hundred thousands token each. I need them to restore my Sentient. But I also need to save some tokens and spend them on either practical gadgets or Qi stones to charge the iron talisman!’ Thought Ye Wei, trying to make the best out of the reward he earned.

Suddenly a girl in a white silk dress appeared in front of Ye Wei’s eyes. Her smile was warmer than last time. Ye Wei however didn’t realise right away that it was not a hologram and actually a real person in front of him, sent from the union’s headquarter, she was the dedicated contact person for Ye Wei.

Ye Wei’s sudden influx of contribution tokens also had effect on her. She was aware that the richer the Runemasters the more powerful they were.

“Hello!” said Ye Wei, a little bit surprised by the new face and sudden gentleness.

“You can call me, Xiao Ying,” answered girl in a sweet, friendly voice.

“Nice to meet you, Xiao Ying. I would like to buy few things with my contribution tokens, please.” Said Ye Wei while browsing through the available items.

“I will be glad to assist you. What do you wish to purchase?” Smiled Xiao Ying, showcased her cute dimples, and lightly nodded.

“I need one Nourish Soul pill, fifty of high grade Qi stones... I will also be needing two deception scrolls... And...”

‘Yea! It makes more and more sense for me to get a deception scrolls, not only will I be able escape under its effect, I can even perform a counterstrike if I pair it with the iron talisman...’ Ye Wei was already calculating how he could deal with more powerful demons if he was to run into one.

While he was browsing through the various scrolls, one of them caught his attention, ‘Instant Shadow Scroll!?’

The Instant Shadow Scroll contained a specialized stance, its power was blood-bound, could only be used by the person who bought the scroll.

Intrigued by the scroll’s name, Ye Wei took the time to read the item’s description. “Instant Shadow Scroll: upon activation, the scroll will create an energy vortex, an interspatial gateway. The user will be able to re-enter the normal realm anywhere within two hundred kilometers distance from where the scroll was activated.”

‘The stance contained by this type of scrolls are going to be useful if I ever get hunted by demon kings or maybe even demon sovereigns...’

“I didn’t even know I needed this scroll before now! I’ll take one of these, thank you!”

Ye Wei shifted his focus onto the price of the scroll. It was way more than he expected, one point five million contribution tokens.

He felt a little bit uneasy, he just received the tokens and didn’t want to spend all of them at once.

Although the scroll was very expensive, for Ye Wei it represented a great importance to obtain something like Instant Shadow scroll, and he was actually willing to spend as many tokens for it as needed, for the fact that this stance could become a true lifesaver in dangerous situations.

“Also an Instant Shadow scroll, please!”

“A Nourish Soul pill for five hundred thousand tokens, fifty high grade

Qi stones for five hundred thousand contribution tokens, two deception scrolls for six hundred thousand contribution tokens, and one Instant Shadow scroll for one point five million tokens. Do you wish to purchase anything else?” Xiao Ying listed all of the ordered goods.

“No, thank you. I wish to keep the remaining two million contribution tokens for when I need them.” Answered Ye Wei thoughtfully. “Xiao Ying, how long will it take for me to receive my order?”

“What do you mean how long?” Xiao Ying froze for a moment in surprise.

“Eh?” Ye Wei became confused.

Xiao Ying chuckled apologetically, “I am sorry. I forgot to tell you that when you make an order for more than one million contribution tokens and the total weight does not exceed thirty pounds, the Runemaster Union can send it to you through our teleportation system. You only need to inject your Qi into the badge for identification and enable the locating system. After pressing the purple button on the bottom right of the badge, a portal will open up on your end and the shipment will be with you in just a blink of an eye.” She patiently explained, aware that it was the first time Ye Wei ordered expensive items.

His mouth dropped in surprise. ‘Who could have imagined that the Runemaster Union’s badge had such feature.’ Following Xiao Ying’s directions, Ye Wei was able to access the runic teleportation array.

“Whoosh!” The purple runes from the badge flew forth and continuously transformed, shining in bright blinding light.

The air compressed, became thicker, twisting and twirling, and suddenly the items appeared inside.

They were the items Ye Wei just ordered, the scroll, the stones and the pills.

“That was quick! Thank you for your aid Xiao Ying!” Ye Wei said politely, he then bade farewell and closed down his badge.

Thousands of miles away, a magnificent conglomeration of palaces stretched across the vale. The headquarter of Runamester's Union was one of the most beautiful places visited by numerous people.

Billions of people were heading to different directions between tables and chairs, trying to coexist, coordinate themselves in the palace, rushing around to process affairs of different dynasty's union branch.

Inside one of the palaces, a group of young ladies spoke continuously to their badges and occasionally smiled politely, there were a thousand of these girls.

Inside the crowd, one of the young ladies was wearing a white silk dress, wrapped in ribbons. Her glossy black hair reached down to her waist. She stretched her back, extended her slim but curvy body, her perky breasts popped out while smiling.

"Xiao Ying, what are you so happy about?" the girl on Xiao Ying's left asked, surprised her friend's sudden positive outburst.

"I met today a three star Runemaster that all of a sudden spent almost three million contribution tokens! Can't believe I was assigned to help someone so resourceful!" A smile spread widely across Xiao Ying's cheerful face. Even though she was also a Runemaster, clerking at the Runemaster Union headquarters and helping other fellow colleagues was her part-time job.

"A three star Runemaster that spent three million contribution tokens in one go? You are so lucky!" The girl in green was struggling to keep her face straight from envy. "And I was assigned to help a seven star Runemaster who doesn't spend more than fifty thousand contribution tokens like... ever. Every trade with him takes at least half a day to complete... I wish I would be assigned to someone less boring than this..."

"Can you imagine that he was only sixteen years old? It was truly an amazing work shift!" Xiao Ying wrapped her slender arm around her friend in green with a smile, "How do you feel about having lunch together? My treat!"

"Sixteen year old? Three star Runemaster? Isn't it the one everyone is

talking about? Who was able to find the first vermillion rune essence? He is truly talented! What does he look like? Is he cute?” The girls kept gossiping as they wiggled their way through the crowd.

Xiao Ying smiled shyly while being dragged out of the building by her friend.

Meanwhile, at the City Lord's mansion, Ye Wei went through all the items that he purchased, swallowed the Nourish Sou pill and began to cultivate. He needed to heal his sentient as soon as possible, there was no time to spare.

The essence from the Nourish Soul pill slowly entered his system, spreading through his body, healing his Sentient's injuries.

As Ye Wei expected, the Nourish Soul pill mended, strengthened his Sentient swiftly and effectively.

‘The five-hundred contribution tokens were not wasted, I can feel how this is different to all other pills I have been taking.’ Thought Ye Wei as he noticed that his cultivation was improving and his body was taking in the primal energy from the surroundings.

After more than two hours of cultivation, Ye Wei finally felt fully recovered. He felt more powerful than before the fight with Tu Fusheng, furthermore the Mystic Mount's presence in his Sentient also became stronger. The fatigue he felt after searching for the vermillion essence rune evaporated, Ye Wei was feeling refreshed and healed.

Although feeling fresh, he decided to not spend his energy looking for the second rune, as he knew how difficult it will be and he needed all his strength for now.

Ye Wei started recharging the iron talisman with the fifty Qi stones that he just acquired.

The grooves on the iron talisman slowly lit up, as more and more Qi was consumed by it under Ye Wei's guidance.

‘The amount of Qi required to charge the talisman fully increased after every discharge. This is the fourth time I charge the talisman and I don’t think I will be able to charge it without using these high grade Qi stones. They are quite expensive and difficult to find, and even then one high grade Qi stone only fills in two or three grooves. I need to be more careful with this.’

‘It will take more than thirty high grade Qi stones this time. I need to save up some contribution tokens. Who knows how much more I will need in the future...’

Chapter 158: Lu Family, Qing State

Ye Wei remained in the City Lord's mansion for few more days, until the other participants were sent back to their schools and academies. Chen Yuan called the South Star students for a farewell meeting at last.

"I will send my men to escort you home, and don't worry, I will keep it on the down low. Please be careful when you are back in Green Moon City! Stay safe!" The City Lord sincerely reminded Ye Wei the threats from demons were still unresolved.

"Thank you, My Lord, for everything you've done for me, for your concerns." Ye Wei was thankful for the treatment and care he received. It warmed his heart to know that someone as influential as Chen Yuan was not only very powerful, but also had a gentle and caring temperament.

The vice-principal, Xu He and the rest of the South Star tournament team bade farewell to Chen Yuan. The whole team then quietly left the city under the personal supervision of the City Lord and the commander.

Jian Chen, from Zhoutian Sword School, as well as the three strongest young cultivators from Galaxy Academy were all approached by commander Shi for further interview and rounds of screening process.

As for Xue Yao, she didn't have any more opportunities to see Ye Wei since the day when her brother was fighting in the tournament. She was trying to get in touch with him afterwards, but all the students were getting sent back and so she headed to the capital to spectate the next stage of the tournament, hoping to meet him there. As for the other school teams, the ones who ranked high celebrated their success while the young cultivators that didn't do well went into a bit of a depressive state.

But with the results aside, everyone were still glad to have attended the tournament. Where there was death, there was also hope. They kept talking about the fight between Ye Wei and Tu Fusheng, the fight that became almost a local legend, something the spectators will be telling their children and grandchildren about.

How Ye Wei was able to become the strongest God's Seven, that his final opponent turned about to be a demon... Many of the details were something people still couldn't completely wrap their minds around. Everyone was fascinated by his level of cultivation at such young age, and thought that he had a promising, very bright future ahead of him. Also the news about Ye Wei being a Runemaster quickly spread among the participants and spectators, that only contributed to the local's admiration to a fanatical level.

After the tournament Ye Wei became a celebrity among the thirty-six outskirt cities region. The younger kids from the schools that participated wished to be like him one day, the older ones secretly envied and admired his power, trying to learn from his success. Because nobody had seen Ye Wei after the tournament was over, people started speculating about his disappearance. The most popular believe was that he was sent to the Green Army's secret training camp, that he had already been sent to Qing state's capital by Commander Shi.

They were hoping that perhaps one day they will hear about Ye Wei again and maybe even get to see him in person, and that, when that day came, he will be someone even more powerful.

Two figures, with prodigious presence, were standing silently on the wall of the Ning City, looking at the vehicles slowly disappearing on the road that led into the mountains.

"Argh!" Grunted Commander Shi, "I am still disappointed that I wasn't able to convince him to join our ranks! He would certainly have been a great addition!"

The other figure, Chen Yuan, laughed with slight regret, patting his dear friend on the shoulder: "Still having problems letting this one go, Commander? He will serve well in Runemaster Union. He is now bound to them and hopefully we will hear about his accomplishments. With talents like his we can just try to guide him so he will stay on the good side...."

Commander Shi Qing nodded slightly, still regretful but his mind

wished a bright future for Ye Wei.

The vehicle, slowly drifting away, finally disappeared over the horizon.

Green Moon City

Ye Wei and the rest were finally back to familiar surroundings, stylishly returning home in a large, secure runicle loaned to them by Chen Yuan.

The gates of the city were heavily protected by more than a dozen soldiers. Their silver armor shone bright, reflecting the afternoon's sun. No one was allowed to enter before being inspected thoroughly by the guards at the checkpoints set up by Green Moon City's City Lord, as a precaution, security check to prevent demon infiltration.

Next to the guards stood two men dressed in white, talking to the city guard officer. The uniformed man was constantly nodding and bowing.

Both men in white were fairly young, in their twenties, dressed in lavish wear, both wearing thin silver crowns on their heads, standing pridefully next to the common guards and looked down on the ordinary citizens passing through.

Xu He furrowed his brows, disliking the two strange faces he was seeing, and thought that something was definitely not in order.

The runicle slowly stopped in front of the tightly shut gates. Xu He walked out from the vehicle to speak with the guards.

"Hey, Vice-Principle is that you? You are back from the tournament!" The head of the city guard immediately recognised Xu He, humbly bowed before the respected figure.

"Officer Lei, all of my students are in the runicle. Would you let us through? They could really use some rest!" Xu He glanced at the guards patrolling the gate, thinking that it had been a while since the city was this alert.

"Yes, of course, sir!" Shouted Officer Lei, ordering to the guards to clear the pass and open the gate. "Quickly, let the Vice Principal through!"

Several guards immediately hurried to the gate to lift the barricades to let the runicle in.

The two young men in white decided to approach the runicle, strode slowly while staring at Xu He.

“People are only allowed into the city once they have been inspected and have their belonging examined! I don’t see why there should be any exception made for you or your students! As far as we know the demon that caused trouble a few days ago was disguised as a student! Now, search them!” One of them stepped forward, his cold tone carried over his pride.

Xu He’s face went pale with anger. South Star Academy was one of the three most powerful establishment in Green Moon City, even the City Lord would not dare to close the doors in normal circumstances. “This is our home! We just put Green Moon City on the map because of these youngsters’ efforts! How dare you disrespect us!?”

“Lu Ruoshan, Lu Chang, this is actually the vice-principal of South Star Academy...” Whispered Officer Lei. Xu He’s gloomy face, gave Officer Lei a headache, ‘Am I supposed to choose a side here?’

Lu Ruoshan and Lu Chang were the two of the stronger youngsters of Lu family. They both were in their late twenties and were already eight star Condensed prime Warriors. Considering their cultivation level and family background, they did not care about the Green Moon City official, and they were never going to bow before South Star Academy either.

“Have you forgotten about your orders, officer?! No one questions my commands!” Yelled Lu Ruoshan furiously. He quickly lifted his hand and slapped the Commander on his cheek.

The head officer jerked back, a tiny drop of blood was running down his jaw from the corner of his mouth while he tried to keep himself on his feet.

“Officer Lei!”

The guards at the gate hastily hurried to their chief, caught him before

he fell, and stared angrily at the two young men. However, they didn't dare to speak. The Lu's strength was intimidating, the guards didn't dare provoking them.

Meanwhile the students in the runicle started to come out one by one, annoyed by being held for so long and puzzled to see two arrogant youngsters, the strange faces at the gates by the guards who watched them grow up.

"Vice Principal, who are those two?" Asked Ye Wei worryingly.

"They are from Lu family. I am not even sure what these Lu youngsters are doing here..." Frowned Xu He, he recognized the golden crest on the white coats.

'Lu family? Could it be related to Lu Feng?' Ye Wei didn't like this at all, he gently shook his head, 'No, it can't be. Lu Feng is just a love child. There is no possible way he sent these two condensed prime Warriors here, I don't see the reason why he would do so either.'

All of a sudden, Lu Chang shouted arrogantly, "Our elders gave us orders! Green Moon City had been taken over by our family. Everyone who wishes to enter or exit must have their identity confirmed and recorded. If you do not open the runicle right now, we will have to enter by force!"

'Green Moon City had been taken over?' Ye Wei frowned. He couldn't believe what he was hearing, 'What interest has the Lu family in this City?!'. His chest ached as a bad feeling overtook his body: 'What have happened while I was away!?'

"I can vouch for everyone in this runicle, they are all my students! As I said, we just returned from Ning City. They left with me to participate in the tournament and now they are back. This runicle you are looking at, was given to us by Ning City Lord's, Chen Yuan, and Green Army Commander Shi!" Said Xu He angrily, the air around became heavy as his energy burst out. The eight star condensed prime Warrior's wrath turned the barricade into dust.

Recognized Commander Shi's and Chen Yuan's names, the Lu

youngsters' eyes flashed with a trace of fear, but they were able to recompose themselves quickly. "Commander Shi is not here and he has no jurisdiction to overrule my family's authority here in Green Moon City!"

Lu Ruoshan and Lu Chang took a step forward simultaneously. The pressure of two eight star condensed prime Warriors merged together, bursted towards Xu He.

"Vice Principal Xu, we were ordered to act upon a misconduct. Don't make us use force!" The vibration of their voices echoed, shook the city walls and fluttered the vice-principal's robe.

Xu He's face suddenly became paler. He didn't think that these youngsters would be a match to him. They looked so young, but both were actually eight star condensed prime Warriors. He could not defeat either of them separately and it was not easier having to fight them at the same time.

Xu He was forced to step back, puzzled and surprised to see that such powerful youngsters guarded the city. Only one thought was currently in his head. 'What have happened here?!'

Seeing that Xu He was having trouble standing against these two Lu family youngsters, Ye Wei walked out from the runicle, and used his enchanted will-force to relieve the pressure that was suppressing the vice-principal.

"Being one of the Lu's does not give you any privileges here in Green Moon City!" Grunted Ye Wei through his teeth, staring coldly at the white-robed cultivators.

"How dare you?!"

"A kid dares speaking to us, Lu's, in this tone?! Fine, I am now officially suspecting you, are a demon? On your knees! Don't resist or we will kill you on this very spot!" Lu Ruoshan's bloodthirsty gaze was casted onto Ye Wei's face.

They couldn't sense Ye Wei's cultivation level, so they didn't know how

strong he actually was. All they saw was a sixteen year old boy spitting bold insults at them.

‘These Lu youngsters are acting like the city belongs to them!’ Ye Wei narrowed his eyes and clenched his hand in fists. ‘I can’t get rid of you but I can surely teach you two a lesson.’

“You are in Green Moon City right now and here in Green Moon City, dogs wear muzzles.” as Ye Wei spoke, a star like array appeared underneath his feet, he rode the wave of energy and turned into a flash.

In a blink of an eye, Ye Wei emerged in front of Lu Ruoshan and Lu Chang, his Zodiac Sword Qi was already on their necks before they could react.

The sharp Qi swords were in a threatening position, they both knew their heads will be cut off if they were to move even just an inch.

Fear suddenly dominated the youngsters, horror in their eyes as they stared at Ye Wei, and didn’t dare to blink. They never expected a sixteen year old to be so strong, especially after they couldn’t sense any Qi disturbance from him.

Ye Wei just displayed the speed and strength of someone much stronger than an average eight star condensed prime Warrior. Besides, Lu Ruoshan seriously underestimated his enemy, not prepared to his powerful attack, and they were now on a teenager’s leash, with drops of cold sweat on his forehead.

“But... Lu Ruoshan and Lu Chang are both eight star condensed prime Warriors! Even so they lost to this boy!? This kid is terrifyingly strong!” Exclaimed Officer Lei looking over shocked faces of the guards.

Chapter 159: Forgotten Treasure

Lu Chang kept his head completely still, rolled his eyes down and saw Ye Wei's Qi sword on his neck. He gulped, nervous, tried to sound as calm as possible, "Kid, don't make a mistake! We are from The Lu family. Think twice before you accidentally end your own life."

Lu Chang and Lu Ruoshan were slightly scared but they have not been challenged enough throughout the entirety of their lives to feel too threatened.

"Oh, is that so? Now, please, define the word mistake for me." Ye Wei said coldly in Lu duo's ears. He pressed his sword Qi harder onto their necks, the blood they were so proud of began to run down their necks. If Ye Wei was to apply more pressure, both Lu's heads would be cut off clean.

'This kid is out of his mind!' Lu Ruoshan's face turned ashen, shocked to by the young boy that was powerful enough to kill him, 'He might not be bluffing... How could anyone become that strong without powerful and influential family behind him...'

Knowing better than to throw his live away, Lu Ruoshan took a deep breath and spoke reluctantly, "It's our fault, we should have known better than to be disrespectful."

Lu Chang, on his side, lowered his head too, refusing to let himself die young.

Ye Wei grunted as he saw the two softening up, and slowly deactivated the stance thinking, 'Killing these two won't do me any good. Instead it might just bring trouble upon my family...'

Officer Lei rubbed the blood off the corner of his lips and ordered the soldiers to tidy up the mess. "Vice-Principal, please!" He gave Ye Wei a good, respectful look, then turned his focus onto Xu He.

"We are leaving!" Xu He looked over at Ye Wei and Lu's duo, returned into the runicle, and they began to move through the city gate.

All the students that were completely silent while watching the fight unrolling, started to talk all at once, curious about what just happened.

“Why would the Lu family send people to Green Moon City? What happened?”

“The Lu family is so obnoxious! Talking like if they owned this city!”

Liu Jian and a few students in the team were members of martial families. They were wary, listening while the other talked, sensed that something bad had happened while they were away and that they needed to hurry back to their families in case the Lu’s were indeed planning to take over.

Ye Wei’s heart fell into his feet, ‘What if the Lu family is actually looking to take over our ancestral land at North Hill Bay? Do they plan on controlling the entire city now? What the hell had happened in here?!’

Lu Ruoshan and Lu Chang were slowly recovering from the shock as they watched the runicle drive into the city.

Lu Chang’s eyes flashed with anger, “So we just let them go like this?” He wiped blood off his neck, still slightly startled and also overwhelmed by rage.

“What do you have in mind?” Lu Ruoshan looked curiously at his brother.

“We need to let the elders know about this. They will be able to deal with this kid without any problem!” said Lu Chang, infuriated.

Lu Ruoshan shook his head in disagreement, “No! You are not thinking straight. The elders are busy as they are. They barely have time to eat. Besides, it was just a teenage boy. How do you think we will look in our family’s eyes when they find out about this? If you really want to kill the boy, we need to plan it carefully and make it look like an accident to not provoke anyone!”

After hearing Lu Ruoshan’s sinister sharing, the anger in Lu Chang’s eyes slowly subsided. He couldn’t deny his brother’s words. Even though they were offended by Ye Wei’s actions, they would need to not act

hotheaded.

Meanwhile, Ye Wei had entered the city together with Xu He and the rest of his team. “Vice Principal, I need to get back to my family as soon as possible. I hope you don’t mind if I leave you here.”

Xu He nodded solidly, he too felt that he had important matters in need of his immediate attention back in South Star. “If the Lu family really took over the city, I need to rush back to school now. If you or your family need anything you can find me there. South Star will never be under their jurisdiction and we will do anything to protect our students!”

Ye Wei was now one of the most valuable student of South Star, and Xu He was aware of it.

“Thank you, Vice Principal!” Ye Wei bowed respectfully and rushed home after bidding farewell.

On his way back, Ye Wei met few of his family members but none of them mentioned the Lu’s taking over the Ye family. He felt a bit relieved but was also concerned about Green Moon City as he finally heard some first hand information regarding its current state.

From the information he was able to gather, the Lu family entered the city shortly after Ye Wei left for the tournament and even the Green Moon City Lord did not have enough influence to say no to a family as powerful as the Lu’s. It was not long after the soft invasion when the City Lord gave up his men to instead be managed by the Lu’s, and after they took control over the forces, two Lu’s were sent to each of the martial families in Green Moon City for ‘administrational aid’.

‘Right after I left for the tournament... that means Lu Feng is not related to this invasion?’ Ye Wei frowned, frustrated as he couldn’t yet to put the pieces together.

“Do you know what the Lu family is after?” Asked Ye Wei while looking at the group of young Ye’s with an interrogating gaze.

“We really don’t know...” they all shook their head, dazed.

“I heard that Lu family requested few people from each martial family

to help them search for something in the mountains all around Green Moon City, but no one could work out what it is they were looking for.”

“They are searching for something?” Ye Wei frowned, ‘Is it related to the North Hill Bay? Lu Feng must have discovered something three years ago... There was nothing special about that plot of land though, as far as the family knows it’s just where our ancestors were buried...’

‘But if Lu Feng knew that something was hidden at North Hill Bay, why didn’t he tell his family..’

‘If my theory is correct, what is hidden in North Hill Bay is very valuable, so much that Lu Feng is not willing to give it up for the Lu family’s recognition...’

‘Everything is pointing towards the ancestral land! That’s where I should investigate...’

Ye Wei arrived at the Ye Mansion while still in a deep thought, after nearly tripping on the door frame he realized he was home. He ran straight into the hall, looking for his parents or anyone he could talk to.

The family’s butler was the first one to notice Ye Wei as he entered the hall. “Ye Wei is back!”

Hearing the old butler, Ye Zhengqing stood up abruptly, a smile of joy spread across his face, “Little Wei! You are finally back!”

“Grandpa! It’s so good to see you again!” Exclaimed Ye Wei walking into the room happy to see the Patriarch healthy and well. Only moments after he recognized another figure standing on the side. Ye Wei froze for a second then quickly bowed, “Master Yi!”

Master Yi chuckled and smiled back at him, his eyes full of love, “Good to see that you are back alive and healthy!”

Master Yi had spent three years training Ye Wei. During that time they became as close as family. He sent Ye Wei to take the Runemaster test not expecting Ye Wei to pass, he thought his apprentice could benefit from failure, could learn how to be patient. He was worried when he let Ye Wei leave to participate in the tournament and although he knew his

apprentice will make him proud he could never imagine how much Ye Wei would accomplish – a three star Runemaster, one of the Seven New Runes and God's Seven. It was a great honor to be the mentor of someone like Ye Wei.

There was so much Ye Wei wanted to tell his granddad and Master Yi, but he was also impatient, could not wait to see his parents again.

Ye Wei casted his eyes to the other side of the room and only then noticed two middle aged beard men in white robes, looking curiously at Ye Wei.

Their white robes were the same style and had exactly the same crest as the other Lu's duo at the gate. Ye Wei's heart sank, 'They are here!'

It was becoming apparent now that Ye Wei won't let them speak. The two men's impatience grew.

"Ye Patriarch, so what do you say to our request?" One of the men asked Ye Zhengqing in a grave, blunt tone.

Ye's family patriarch's displeasure was clear, written all over his face, but he made an effort to cover it up, "I have given you more than one hundred people to aid your search in the mountains, now you come here and ask for more? We are a fairly small family, I cannot spare more people. My best offer to you would be twenty extra. We cannot do any better than that!"

Ye Zhengqing's words were loud and clear, but they were not what those two man expected to hear.

"Ye Zhengqing, we treated you with great respect and this is your response?" Lu De grunted, annoyed, 'Maybe I shouldn't have expected that much from a small family like yours anyway...'

"Master, what is this all about?!" asked Ye Weil with the voice transmission technique.

He needed to know more about this invasion.

"Your family already sent hundred people to help the Lu's in their

search in the mountains next to Green Moon City, but they are still not satisfied.” Whispered Master Yi to Ye Wei, clearly feeling unpleasant with everything that had been happening around him.

‘This is definitely related to North Hill Bay! But how did the Lu family know there is something there and what can I do now...’ Ye Wei thought.

‘My ancestors are buried there, North Hill Bay had always belonged to the Ye family. Whatever is hidden there belongs to my family!’ Ye Wei clenched his fist and decided that he should not wait any longer, that he needed to go tonight to North Hill Bay.

“Don’t think that you can fool us! We are aware that Ye family is not less powerful than the Du’s and they were able to give us two hundred and twenty people, and you offered hundred less! Do you think me and my brother here are blind or stupid?!” Lu De’s brother slammed his fist on the table and stood up aggressively.

The solid sandalwood table did not even shake but his palm print was now deep in the table. Not a drop of water had been spilled from any of the cups that rested on the antique furniture, showing off his incredible strength.

Ye Wei glanced at the table, ‘He seems to be at least a ten star condensed prime Warrior judging by his physical strength...The other men isn’t showing that much aggression but he is probably just as strong...’

“The Lu family sent us two ten star condensed prime Warriors? Aren’t we just the luckiest household in all of Green Moon City?” Ye Wei’s eyes lit up, thought that he had a chance to uncover something of great value if he beats the Lu’s to North Hill Bay.

Chapter 160: Supreme Dragon Ridge

“Lu Ren, young one, you have misunderstood what I have said. In no way am I undermining the Lu family’s authority. Yes, it is true what you have said about us. Currently, we are in our best and strongest form since a long time. Nevertheless, we are still insignificant compared to the city’s Big Three. The Ye family is simply incapable of giving you more people! We need our Warriors!” Ye Zheng Qing was frustrated. Lu Ren and Lu De were showing no signs of backing off, and the Ye family was far from strong enough to challenge the Lu’s.

Only few days ago, twenty more ten-star condensed prime warriors from the Lu family arrived at Green Moon City. The latest addition of two returned prime Warriors of the Lu family quickly established themselves in the city. So much so, Ye Patriarch knew better than to anger them.

“Mister patriarch, we are just following orders. This is not easy for us at all. Please, understand. I am sorry we have to be this pushy.” Lu De explained.

Both Lu Ren and Lu De were ten-star condensed prime Warrior. One of them acted tough while the other acted considerate. Their tactics appeared to be persuasive in the most subtle, suggestive way.

“Pfft, do you realize that the rest of the top ten families other than yours were able to send two hundred Warriors to help us with our project? Ye Zheng Qing, please, don’t say one thing and do the other! I don’t care for your excuses! If you don’t have two hundred men by noon tomorrow, my brother and I will show no mercy!” Lu Ren stared coldly at Ye Zhengqing. He threatened him even though they knew the Ye’s were running a tight ship; it was more likely than not the Ye family was unable to provide that many men.

‘I am still too weak!’ Ye Wei angrily thought. He clenched his fists angrily, feeling helpless.

Ye Wei was powerless before the Lu family. ‘I still cannot protect my family from them! There are too many of them in the city, and they all

seem incredibly strong. Yet, I cannot just sit here and let them humiliate my family!’

“Sir, we really do not have that many Warriors in the Ye family. The best we can do is to send thirty more men. One hundred and fifty is a nice, round number, and it is the best we can offer. Please understand the situation we are in!” Ye Wei slowly lifted his head. He looked at the two Lu family ten-star condensed prime Warriors. Lu De narrowed his eyes in response; he tried analyzing the cocky teenager who stood in front of him.

“Please consider my words even though I am young.” Ye Wei sincerely spoke as he took out the Runemaster badge and flashed it to the two Lu’s.

“Three-star Runemaster?!” Lu Ren was stunned, ‘This boy looks not a day older than sixteen, but he is already a Runemaster?!’

The men didn’t really care about a three-star Runemaster, it was not enough to surprise them. However, achieving that position at Ye Wei’s age was definitely something extraordinary.

“I think the Ye’s are trying their best. Will you two just be reasonable?” The older runemaster in the hall looked at the two Lu’s and commented.

“Okay then, if you say so Master Yi. Fine, one hundred and fifty it is!” Lu De smirked then thought to himself, ‘Where did all these Runemasters come from?’

‘A teenaged one and the old one. We were told by the elders, specifically, not to mess with Master Yi. This is a bit of a sticky situation.’ Lu Ren thought again.

“Thank you for your flexibility. Now, would you like to stay here and have dinner with us?” Ye Zhengqing made a polite hand gesture, planning to get closer and see if he could get some useful information from the brothers.

“Thank you for the offer, but there are other things that need our attention,” Lu De and Lu Ren stood up simultaneously. They took another look at Ye Wei, so they could recognize his face later on. Not long after the negotiation, they left the mansion.

They hurried to report to their family elders that the Ye family had a sixteen-year-old three star Runemaster.

Ye Patriarch felt relieved as he watched Lu Ren and Lu De leaving his family's mansion. The news about Ye Wei's accomplishments quickly spread across the mansion, and the family held a great feast in his honor.

After dinner, when everyone went back to their rooms to get ready to sleep, Ye Wei quietly snuck out of the window. He wanted to look at the mountains and valleys, which spread wide outside the city.

"North Hill Bay." He murmured to himself as he casted his gaze afar.

Standing on top of the oldest tree in the city, he saw distant mountains across the river, bathed in moonlight.

North Hill Bay was a large wasteland full of rugged rocks on the further side of the riverbank.

"When was I last there? Ten, maybe, maybe?" Ye Wei gazed upon his family's ancestral land from a distance. 'I would like to know what hidden treasure the Lu's are searching for; especially, since they want to take over an entire city just to uncover it.' Ye Wei muttered to himself while shivering in the chilly night wind.

Even though Ye Wei stood on the tip of a tree during a windy night, he was steady as a mountain. His recently improved Qi and will-force made him agile, strong, and balanced.

"If our family records are correct, we did have a Supreme Warrior in the founding generations. Thus, if there will be any treasure hidden in North Hill Bay, there is a large possibility the treasure would be related to that specific great – great – great – great granddad of mine!"

The blood of a Supreme contained mysterious power. It was an inherited power, similar to Ning City's City Lord who was the descendant of a Supreme. Although the power has been diluted, lost in following generations, Chen Yuan was still able to use that power to do what a lot of people his generation thought impossible.

The power of the Supreme's blood had faded through generations

without any worthy young cultivators being able to discover the extraordinary potential hidden within their blood. This was partially the reason why the Ye family began to decline centuries ago.

The knowledge about the Supreme Warrior had as well been forgotten through generations. No one was able to put the Supreme's teaching to use. There was no way Ye Wei could have known about this, but after his Sentient began to host the Mystic Mount, he spent a great amount of time researching more about his family's lineage and how the mysterious book ended up in their possession. He started to suspect a connection between the mysterious volume and their fabled ancestor.

'The Lu family spent many resources investigating what could be hidden at North Hill Bay. Even if this has nothing to do with the fabled Ye Supreme, this could be a great discovery!' Ye Wei shook his head to stop himself from getting too deep into his own mind. He leaped forth, channeled his Qi to his back, and glided across the night sky like a falcon, flying over the river into the Ye's ancestral land.

'I can sense a disturbance in the air,' thought Ye Wei as he landed on North Hill Bay's ground.

Abruptly, the Progenitor's hoarse voice sounded in Ye Wei's mind. 'The land of the Supreme...'

Ye Wei's brows twitched and arched, his eyes shone bright, and, although, he was not sure what the term meant, he was able to gather that it was indeed related to a Supreme.

'Who was the Supreme of this land?' An air of adventurous curiosity swept over Ye Wei's face. He reached into his bag and touched the scale.

'Wouldn't you like to know that! Hmph...Why should I tell you?'

Like I care?! You stupid dog, pfft!" Ye Wei heard the insolence in the Progenitor's words and ignored the demon's voice entirely.

'Hahaha, you can say whatever you want! I am still not going to tell you!" The Progenitor just discovered a new way to annoy Ye Wei, and he wasn't going to back down that easily.

‘Well, ugly monster, I think you are forgetting that I am a three-star Runemaster who has all the access to books and information imaginable.’ Ye Wei turned his Runic Badge in his hand, ‘I can find anything in here, like I need a dog’s help!’

‘Damn you, mortal!’ Disappointment and anger poured from the Progenitor’s consciousness, ‘And damn that Combat Master as well! He couldn’t even cultivate properly, and, instead, wasted his time developing gadgets and pathetic devices.’

Ye Wei completely ignored the demon’s words; he was already busy searching through the information available to him. Most of the information was free, but some a Runemaster needed to pay contribution tokens to acquire it. The information Ye Wei was looking for costed only one thousand tokens. ‘It’s good that I saved some contribution tokens! This is cheap!’

“That’s what I thought!” Ye Wei exclaimed. He was in shock after reading the information which confirmed his intuition. He looked down at North Hill Bay’s mountain range, a range that pertained to him.

The passages read:

“When a Supreme dies, his flesh becomes soil and his spine becomes rocks. Sometimes a Supreme’s death can give birth to mountains. These mountains are often charged with concentrated primal energy.

“After a millennia, these agglomeration of mountains will become Supreme Dragon Ridge.”

“There are three parts to each Dragon ridge, the Drakehead, Draketorsal and Draketail. A Draketaill contains runic arrays. Formed naturally, they are able to absorb primal energy from the skies and the earth and store the land’s essence distribute it within the Dragon ridge.

“The Draketorsal is the longest part of the ridge. It stretches over a thousand kilometers. Nourished by the Supreme’s residual energy, the soil and rocks are often denser, catalyzing the process of formation of rocks and minerals crystals. Qi stones and primal minerals are abundant within these mountains. Furthermore, materials needed for the crafting of soul

weapons, like Ancestor gold and Purple gold, are harvested exclusively from these mountains. Emperor jades can also be found, but they are much rarer.”

‘But Emperor jades are not available in common markets and can’t be bought from ordinary traders!? They cost as much as sky stances do!’ Ye Wei switched his focus from the text projected to the mountain range around North Hill Bay. He felt euphoric as he traced the mountains’ ridge with his eyes.

“Draketail absorbs energy; Draketorsal contains treasures, but the Drakeheads are the most significant phenomenon, especially for cultivators.”

“The energy gravitation at a Drakehead is different to the outside world. When a person cultivates at such place, his effort will be amplified ten times more. Drakehead is also part of the Dragon ridge that contains clues regarding where the Dragon ridge’s treasures are located.”

“So, there was a Supreme in my family! As well, my family was buried at the place where he died.” Ye Wei muttered to himself. A shiver went down his spine, “If the Supreme was a Ye, then all of this belongs to my family!”

“...The treasures of the Draketorsal are deep under the surface. They won’t be exposed until the Dragon ridge explorers activate a runic array at the Drakehead.”

Chapter 161: A Young Runemaster's Past

‘So, now you know that the Prime Dragon ridge is located on the North Hill Bay, what are you going to do? Do you even know where to start searching for the treasures? The Draketail is over ten kilometers long, and the Draketorsal is around a thousand kilometers long. Without my help, searching for a ten meters long and wide Drakehead in the wide terrain of North Hill Bay is like searching for a needle in a haystack!’

‘Besides, you don’t even know what a Drakehead looks like. You might even step on it and never know that it’s right under your feet!’

‘Now, if you kneel obediently, boy, and proclaim me the greatest Progenitor, I might be merciful enough to tell you how to find the Drakehead.’ The demon chuckled. He definitely had an edge up on Ye Wei this time since he possessed the knowledge the young Runemaster desired so badly. His real intention, however, was hidden from Ye Wei’s mind. He wasn’t going to give him any information at all, even if Ye Wei bowed and kneeled a thousand times.

‘Do you think I am stupid enough, old piece of scale, to believe your filthy lies?!’ Ye Wei disdainfully replied.

‘This Prime Dragon ridge contains my family’s fortune. Of course, it would be nice to claim it but I have standards. Why would I trade with you? I would not deserve the treasures if I betray my morals for it!’

‘The Lu’s don’t even know where to search for it, and I assume all they know was that the Ye Supreme died somewhere close to Green Moon City. With only that to work on, even if they had twenty thousand men to order around, they still would have no way of finding the Drakehead. I would be able to find the first treasure before them. All I need are some clues.’ Concerned, Ye Wei was hoping for Lu’s men to spend more time further away from North Hill Bay. ‘The more time they spend away from here, the more time there is for me to look around freely!’

‘If the Lu family is lucky enough, they might be able to find the Dragon’s ridge treasure in less than three years time.’ Ye Wei

approximated how much time it would take for the Lu's troops to get to North Hill Bay. He guessed from the information the Ye's scouts reported that the search team was reaching outwards from the center of Green Moon City.

Lu family acted smart. They didn't send their own troops to Green Moon City, instead they were being cautious and sly by controlling the martial families of the city and use their resources to search for the treasures; thus, other rivaling families in the region would not be alarmed.

Another advantage of such devious methods was the Lu's did not have to spend their resources on the search. If they were lucky enough to find the Drakehead in a decade, the only losers would be the martial families in Green Moon City. The Green Moon city's martial families would have wasted all the efforts and resources and would not even get a share of the treasure. On the other hand, the Lu's, having control over the Supreme Dragon ridge's treasures, would become a superpower, even rivaling Zhou dynasty's three royal families.

'I sense some strong disturbances originating from a distant. I guess it doesn't hurt to try.' Ye Wei thought as he sat in the lotus position. He gently closed his eyes and started to absorb primal energy using his Falling Star Formula, tried to figure out the precise direction where the energy came from.

While the energy was going through his meridians, suddenly a runic lotus slowly appeared between his brow without his notice. He did not realize the Combat Master left him the lotus.

Without Ye Wei knowing, the effect of his Falling Star Form was amplified and acted as an antenna. The pull of his formula reached further with the lotus at the vortex's center. The vortex was grew and spun slowly.

Before, the Falling Star Form was only a cultivating formula, but, now, it was reacting to the small energy disturbances of the Supreme Dragon ridge with the aid of the golden lotus.

'Ehm?' Ye Wei suddenly opened his eyes and curiously looked to the left.

‘There is an energy surge coming from that direction.’

The Supreme Dragon ridge was a Ye’s flesh and bones, and the Falling Star From was also created centuries ago by a powerful Ye. Although the disturbance was minimal due to the distance it originated from, it somehow resonated with the technique Ye Wei used.

“The Supreme Dragon ridge might be left by my ancestor, and I was using our family’s formula. People always said ancestral land is the best place to cultivate.” Ye Wei uttered to himself. He stood up abruptly, thinking, he might be onto something.

Ye Wei, slightly shaking under the night breeze, leaped to his left hand side and sat down again a few hundred meters. He sat down again and activated the Falling Star Formula. He felt a slight disturbance in the air and on the ground around him.

‘The power of the disturbance seems to be stronger at this spot!’

Ye Wei smiled and opened his eyes.

In the faint moonlight, Ye Wei started to follow the trace of energy, kept himself on the move, sat down every hundred feet and utilizing the Formula to investigate, to be able to sense the directions of the strange energy’s source.

‘This kid won’t find anything! Absolutely no one is capable of detecting the energy fluctuation of a Supreme Dragon ridge!’ The Progenitor thought. ‘The Dragon ridges’ energy disturbance is very subtle; it is utterly impossible even under the god’s prime cultivation to be able to sense it.’

Ye Wei moved slowly but methodically. He followed the energy trace and got closer and closer towards the Drakehead. Though he did not know he was heading in the right direction, but the demon in his head did.

The Progenitor became more surprised. Although Ye Wei was still far from the Drakehead, with each of Ye Wei’s stops, it became apparent to the ancient demon that he was being brought closer and closer to the exact spot where the Supreme died.

Six hours had passed; the sun rose over the horizon, and the sky slowly lit up golden pink. The Progenitor was flabbergasted by Ye Wei's progress, and how Ye Wei could actually feel that the energy of the Drakehead was now only ten kilometers away.

'With such speed and determination this kid will reach the Drakehead in less than two hours.'

'How can this be possible?!' The demon was terribly shocked, 'How can this kid sense the energy of the Dragon ridge from so far away?!'

What the Progenitor didn't know was that the Supreme's blood deep within the mountains was resonating energy through the Dragon's ridge, guiding and aiding Ye Wei in his quest.

His ancestors' blood was also in Ye Wei's veins. Although the blood's power had been diluted through time and generations, it was recognised and respected by the land itself. Now, it was amplified by the Combat Master's gift and the original Falling Star Form.

'The energy fluctuation is getting stronger. I can almost feel the power of this land boiling under my feet!' Ye Wei had no clue how shocked the demon was, but he was happy that the demon kept himself quite. He didn't need any distractions now; instead, he needed to execute precise detective work.

"If my theory is right, judging by the energy I sense, the Drakehead is not very far away from here!" Proclaimed, Ye Wei who looked enthusiastically at the rising sun.

"I shall carry on!"

It was becoming easier and easier to follow the energy as Ye Wei became closer and closer to the source.

Meanwhile, ten kilometers away, Lu Feng slowly opened his eyes. He sat on the side of a hundred meter wide pond in the lotus position.

"With this speed, I shall breakthrough to a five-star condensed prime

Warrior sooner than anyone would expect! Lu Feng smiled. Satisfied, he stood up and looked up at the sky.

“This place is mine; I don’t care if I am one of the Lu’s.” He told himself.

“Mom, just wait a little longer. Give me three years, and when I become more influential and powerful, I will make the Lu’s pay for the humiliation they made you endure! I will make them suffer ten, no, a hundred times worse than what they made you go through!” Lu Feng’s gaze turned evil. He stomped the ground and became a flash of light. He headed straight to Green Moon City.

Five years ago, when Lu Feng found out that he was a bastard, he felt ashamed and closed himself up.

That very evening, he learned the truth regarding his past and his heritage. He ran out into the rain into the wilderness that was north of Green Moon City.

He wandered alone into the forests and ended up at a pond close to North Hill Bay. Here, he cried the whole evening to let out his frustration. The moonlight and heavy drops of rain were his only company.

Lu Feng found comfort in the company of the peaceful nature, ever since then, he found comfort in habitually came to the forest, to the wilderland of North Hill Bay. Whenever he felt down or bullied or mocked because of his identity, he came here.

He began to meditate and cultivate by the pond. The more time he spent by the pond the more he noticed that he was cultivating quicker than his usual speed. That’s when he decided to cultivate at the spot whenever he got the time to.

He was able to come by the pond everyday to cultivate. Day after day, year after year, Lu Feng had been training by the Drakehead for five whole years.

Lu Feng then did some research. Although he had no luck in finding out exactly what was so special about the pond, he was not going to share this special piece of land with anyone else. Thus, he used his influence as

a Runemaster's apprentice, looked to take over North Hill Bay.

‘The Ye’s are getting stronger, and the Lu’s have surely stumbled upon some history records regarding this place.’ Lu Feng speculated, ‘I have to be extra careful and cover my tracks well. Hopefully, I will be able to somehow distract them and drive them away from this pond.’

Chapter 162: Cultivate

Not long after Lu Feng's departure, a figure flew past the woods and appeared right next to the pond.

"This should be it." The warm morning sunlight kissed Ye Wei on his cheeks. He panted for air and stared at the small pool of water. A glimmer of joy shone from his eyes, as his heart raced.

'If I train next to the Drakehead, my cultivating speed will increase ten times quicker!' Ye Wei, still excited, remembered what he had read about the Supreme Dragon Ridge.

"More than ten times the speed, so, if I stay here to train and cultivate for the next two weeks... No, not even that! If I train here for the next ten days, I will surely breakthrough to a four-star condensed prime Warrior!" Ye Wei explained to himself.

He clenched his fists tightly. Although he knew there was no time to waste, he was, nonetheless, too excited to even move.

'This will be the perfect proof! Under normal circumstances, with my talent, even with no shortage of resources, it would take me more than four months to breakthrough as of now. However, I will see very soon if this place really is what I think it is!'

The Progenitor saw all of it through Ye Wei's eyes, confused, shocked, and a little angered. Ye Wei was able to find the Drakehead so effortlessly. 'It can't be luck. There is no luck on earth that can lead a man to a Drakehead just in one night!'

'What else is this kid hiding? He must have some secret methods. Secrets that could benefit even me!' The Progenitor had no idea that the Supreme's blood flowed in Ye Wei's veins, and that Ye Wei subconsciously used the Supreme's formula.

'Kid, how did you find this place?' The Progenitor was insatiably curious. He had never witnessed such effective detective work.

'Go on, tell me. I will even reward you with a Sky stance. We can even

do a heavenly oath; I promise. I will not cheat you in any way!’ The Black Scale Progenitor was one of the most powerful beings. It was a rarity something interested him at all. However, with Ye Wei, the Progenitor was willing to gift a powerful creation of his own in exchange of as many of the boy’s secrets he could discover.

‘I do not care for your stupid stances! The fact that you want to know means that I am not going to tell!’ Ye Wei replied coldly, unmoved.

Ye Wei was obviously toying with the Progenitor. Although he was able to find the pond, he was far from knowledgeable enough to explain how his detection system’s intricate workings led him to where he was.

Ye Wei was just following the disturbance of Qi in the surrounding area and went to the direction where it felt the strongest. He did not know why and how the Drakehead’s Qi disturbance resonated with his own.

‘You disrespectful idiot! If you keep up with that attitude, I will tear you into pieces!’ The Progenitor became furious. ‘I am the origin of an entire demon clan! How dare you!’

‘Old dog, how many times have you told me that you were going to kill me? And, yet, I am still alive. Somehow I really doubt that you are capable of tearing me into pieces.’ Ye Wei rolled his eyes.

‘You.. you!’ The progenitor frustrated. It seemed luring clearly didn’t work, and he currently had no way of doing anything to his human host.

The Progenitor grunted angrily and went back to silence.

Ye Wei didn’t want to waste his time arguing either. He knew that cultivating was more important at that point, he needed to prove immediately that he was at the Drakehead and he would rather become stronger than to anger a consciousness in his Sentient by winning pointless arguments.

“Good luck finding this place. I will cultivate while your lot wastes the time on ordering people around aimlessly!” Ye Wei murmured to himself, feeling angry that the Lu’s decided to use the cultivators from Green Moon City as slave laborers. ‘I am now one of the strongest cultivators of

my family but if we want to keep the Dragon ridge within the family, I have to get stronger, I will have to defend this very spot from the possible intruders...'

The memory of Lu Ren and Lu De, two ten-star condensed prime Warrior threatening the Ye family, was still fresh in Ye Wei's mind. If he was strong enough to send the Lu's out of the mansion, he would have.

'If I was a returned prime Warrior, I could have driven the Lu's out of Green Moon City all together...' Ye Wei's eyes shone a determined glow.

'Be patient, I will become stronger, and I will do it quickly!'

'Falling Star Form!' Ye Wei bent his knees, sat next to the pond and adjusted his breathing. He cleared his mind and ran the Ye's formula entering a zen state.

As Ye Wei's Falling Star Formula accelerated to its full speed, dense surges of primal energy from the sky and the earth were drawn to him, absorbed into his body through the pores on his skin.

The raging primal energy circulated through Ye Wei's meridians a few times, the surges then were purified, stored into Ye Wei's dantian as pure and dense Qi. The three cracks on his dantian were pulsing, seemed to be excited to receive the condensed energy.

Ye Wei's cultivation was improving at incredible rate, as his dantian absorbed Qi at the speed he never before experienced.

The intensity of the Supreme Dragon ridge is not good for weaker cultivators. They normally had to slow down the surges before their body could absorb them, but Supreme who died there used the exact same formula Ye Wei was now using. The formula synergized with the Supreme blood in Ye Wei's veins, he was therefore able to absorb and convert the primal energy. Furthermore, Ye Wei's Qi had the qualities similar to the Supreme's, meaning that the energy was flowing smoothly inside his body.

Time flew without Ye Wei noticing, it was already the dead of night when he lifted his head and opened his eyes again. He was already seeing

bright stars hung in the night sky. He took a deep breath, he could feel the atmosphere was heavier than usual because of the busy Qi flow around the area.

Ye Wei only spent one day cultivating at the place, what he thought was a Drakehead, and his dantian was already filled up.

As his dantian became full, there was little point to absorb any more energy before the Qi in his dantian had been consolidated.

‘This is certainly the Drakehead! It was only one day of cultivating and my dantian felt as full as if I have been cultivating continuously for half a month!’ Ye Wei’s excited eyes stared at the moon’s reflection on the pond’s calm surface. He slowly stretched his back and limbs.

“The ancestral graveyard is close by. My ancestors must have established this area as the family’s resting place after the Supreme’s death!” After muttering to himself, Ye Wei’s figure became a blur, ghostly under the pale moonlight. He leaped onto the tip of a tree erected next to the Drakehead pond and overlooked the terrain, the mountain range he knew like the back of his hand.

‘No Lu will take charge of this if I live. None of you will even get to know about this place under my watch, I swear. I, the kin of a Supreme has now officially rediscovered my ancestor’s treasure! It has been forgotten but it was nonetheless left here by a Ye and now it belongs to one!’ Ye Wei was infuriated just thinking about the Lu’s plots. ‘There is no time to waste...’ His foot pressed against the tree’s tip, rode the rebound of the tough tree trunk. Ye Wei launched his body back to Green Moon City’s direction, ready to return to the Ye mansion and plan the defence to detail.

Ye Wei was not going to interfere with the Lu’s search but now that he knew what was at stake and where the Drakehead was, he was not going to stand on the side while the Lu’s men wandered into North Hill Bay. Although it was unlikely for them to find the pond, he was still ready to take precautions in order to avoid it from happening.

Ye Wei finally left the pond. Few hours passed before a dark figure

slowly and carefully approached. The person hidden under the black robe was Lu Feng. Once again he came back to his favourite spot to cultivate, to become stronger, to get a little bit closer to his dream of avenging his mother.

Lu Feng was only twenty two years old and he already achieved more than any ordinary cultivator could even hope for. A two-star Runemaster, a four-star condensed prime Warrior, he was far ahead of everyone his age because of the exceptional effort he put into cultivating.

Cultivator's Qi is very limited and Lu Feng spent most of his Qi on learning more runes and more stances which contributed to his early rise as a Runemaster. This was without any doubts benefit of having discovered such powerful cultivation spot.

The fact that training efficiency was higher at the Drakehead meant that Lu Feng's great efforts were multiplied, which resulted in his cultivation level being more advanced than most of the cultivators his own age.

Lu Feng discovered the Drakehead out of pure coincidence, Ye Wei was guided here by his ancestors' blood, both of them found the point of interest but neither of them were aware the other's knowledge of the pond's power.

Next morning, one hundred and fifty men gathered at the Ye mansion. All of them Warriors, foundation of the Ye family.

The forests and mountains around Green Moon City were very dangerous. Often packs of wild beasts would attack and kill wanders who weren't careful enough to get away. In order to ensure his people's safety, Ye Zhengqing had his grandson, Ye Zhong, leading the force.

Ye Zhong was the strongest young cultivator in Green Moon City. At only twenty five, he was already a condensed prime Warrior.

Together with Ye Wei, he was one of the youngest people to achieve condensed prime level in his family in the last century.

Since Ye Zhong achieved condensed prime level, his cultivation rate had

slowed down a bit as cultivating would become harder the further one went. Taking into account his excellent talent, Ye Zhong was still far from breaking through to the two-star level. Even now that the Ye's were not short of resources, nobody expected him to become a two-star condensed prime Warrior in less than two years.

In the end, when it came to cultivating, resources were not everything. Sentient strength's importance accounted for more as it was directly proportional to how fast one could absorb, purify and consolidate primal energy.

Ironically the only way to strengthen one's Sentient was to cultivate.

"Zhong, these men are the family's elite, the family's foundation. Whatever happens in the wild, you are still these men's leader, you have to stay strong and consider their safety even under stress!" Ye Zhengqing patted his grandson on the shoulder and advised solemnly.

"Grandpa, please don't worry, I will not let our men put their lives at risk for the Lu's at any point of the expedition!" Ye Zhong nodded determinedly. His eyes lingered on the hundred and fifty cultivators and made sure everyone heard his words.

"Grandpa, I would like to go with cousin Zhong!" Ye Wei stepped forward and said out of the blue.

"You should stay here and keep cultivating," Ye Zhengqing hesitated, then shook his head, 'I am sorry Wei, but I can't have you both risking your lives...'

Ye Wei understood the patriarch's intentions, softened and did not bother arguing.

"Be safe!" Ye Zhengqing gave Ye Zhong a hug, then waved as the group headed off, 'The beasts in the woods are just ordinary beasts. You have a condensed prime Warrior as a leader, and it's not just any condensed prime Warrior, it's me little Zhong, you should be fine...'

"Let's go!"

Ye Zhong waved and turned around, leading one hundred and fifty

strong men towards the city's gate.

“Just as I thought the Ye family is becoming stronger and more respectable in the high society, the Lu's show up... I hope the kids don't blame me for making this hard decision...” It was difficult for Ye Zhengqing to see them leave. He signed and slowly looked away.

Chapter 163: Slippery

‘Considering cousin Zhong’s cultivation, the team shouldn’t have any problems, unless they get attacked by a rare wild beast...’ Ye Wei thought, while looking at Ye Zhong’s silhouette exiting the mansion’s gate, ‘But... It’s better to be safe than sorry!’

‘If I follow cousin Zhong, I might be able to spy on the Lu’s and find out what their plans are. Furthermore, I can put the matter of protecting my family into my own hands. Like grandpa said, they are the foundation of the family’s future and I just can’t leave anything to chance!’

Led by a ten-star condensed prime Warrior sent by the Lu’s, the group of two thousand Warriors, assembled from the ten most powerful martial family of Green Moon City, left civilization and began to search the wilderness and the mountains at an extremely slow pace.

Wild beasts usually do not hunt during hours of daylight. Therefore Ye Wei decided to spend his days at the Drakehead, and his nights hidden in the dark wilderness, watching over his family’s squad. When there were wild beasts approaching to their camps, Ye Wei was able to finish them off without anybody noticing.

Nine days had passed in the blink of an eye. Ye Wei was cultivating all this time at the pond before sunset, trying to improve as quickly as he possibly could. With the help of this sacred place, he was only a few steps away from his breakthrough to the four-star level.

The Ye family had been keeping themselves safe in the mansion. There was no unannounced Lu’s visits recently; the Ye’s were also safe, watched over, guarded by their family’s dedicated young Runemaster.

On the ninth day since the Ye patriarch sent the squad for the search, Ye Wei routinely stretched his body after a half day of cultivating. The sun was setting over the horizon and then, as usual, he hurried towards his family squad’s camp.

Part of the troops led by the Lu family finally reached North Hill Bay. Ye Wei became more anxious with each day, scared that they might intrude

his family's sacred ground.

At the foothill of the Ye's ancestral burial hill, a dispute was brewing, and the Ye's were heated. The resting place of the family's ancestor was a prohibited area.

The Du family insisted to help with the search and were very pleased to finally have a reason to invade the Ye's ancestral land. The two families still remembered their fight for this plot of land and the Ye's were not happy to see their enemies so close.

The Du's had two hundred and twenty Warriors led by their Patriarch's brothers, Du Ji, a five star condensed prime Warrior. The pressure of their force was hanging over Ye's.

"Get out of my way, kid!" Yelled Du Ji as his cold gaze swept over the one hundred and fifty men the Ye's assembled and finally stopped on Ye Zhong's face.

"I, Du Ji, am here under the command of the Lu family! We are here to explore this land and report to them if there is any hidden abnormalities! Obstructing me to my task is the same as disrespecting the Lu, kid! Your pathetic family won't be able to deal with the consequences!" He suddenly took a step forward, his mighty Qi presence, like a massive boulder, solidly pressed towards the Ye's men and Ye Zhong.

The might of a five star condensed prime Warrior was fierce. All one hundred and fifty Warriors involuntarily took a step back. Ye Zhong was barely able to stand steadily, marginally withstood Du Ji's offensive Qi burst.

"Du Ji, this is my family's ancestral land! All of my forefathers were buried under the surface of this very hill. It is a sacred ground and I won't let anyone disturb the peace where their souls rest eternally!"

"I will never allow anyone set foot on the hill! If you wish to do so you will have to step over my dead body!" Shouted Ye Zhong as he channeled his Qi, struggling to resist Du Ji's force, but determined to protect his family's burial hill with his life if needed.

During the past three years, due to the protection of Master Yi, the Du's never dared to offend Ye family. However now the tides had changed, as they had the Lu family's support they were no longer scared of the possibilities of Master Yi's interference.

The Du family's assets were irreversibly damaged by the rapid expansion of Ye family's business, especially in the trades of scrolls and mystic arms. The Du's were no longer a family everyone was scared of, and none of them were happy about the downfall and the suppression.

Therefore, even though the North Hill Bay area spread wide across more than thousands of miles, the Du's deliberately set their eyes on the burial hill of the Ye family.

"Ye Zhong, I think you are overstepping yourself. As I have said, we are here under the Lu family's command to explore this mountain. You have no other choice but to let us pass through, unless you want to deal with them instead of us!" sneered Du Ji, smiling viciously after he shamelessly name-dropping.

"As an established cultivator and reasonable man, I really do not want to fight you. I am no bully. But if you are going to be difficult, that leaves me no choice but to do exactly that! Well, I guess you can use a lesson on being respectful if you are dumb enough to mess with the Du family and the Lu family!" Du Ji threatened, grunting coldly.

'Now with the Lu's support, we are in the right. None of the Ye's can do anything about it, even if I decide to paralyze Ye Zhong right here and right now. Obstructing the Lu's search is not a small matter, if they hear about how the Ye's are trying to sabotage their search, they might even reward me for my bravery!'

Du Ji's eyes shone a sinister glow, he had actually been planning to start a fight with the Ye's. Ever since the Lu's came into the picture, the Du's have been doing whatever they could to befriend the representatives from the state-renowned martial family, hoping that their new ally could help them with their revenge against the Ye's.

It was clear to everyone in the Du family that once Ye Wei and Ye

Zhong grew up to fulfil their cultivation potential, Green Moon City will no longer have space for the Du's.

Aware of that fact, the Du family wanted nothing more than to get rid of the two youngsters, However, it was impossible for them to do so when the Ye family was under Master Yi's watch and because the Ye's influence was growing non-stop throughout the past three years.

'This is the moment we've been waiting for! We can start the fight and the Lu's can finish them for us!'

Currently the Ye family was in no position and simply was not on the level the Lu's were on. With the Lu's wide web of connections, even Master Yi was in no position to challenge one of the most influential force in the Qing state.

"Brother Zhong, Du Ji is just looking for trouble here. Let's fight them!"

"Zhong, they do have two hundred and twenty, but I don't think we will lose the fight!" All the Ye's were overwhelmed by resentment, stood forth and unsheathed their weapons

Although the Ye's were outnumbered, they were still better equipped than the Du's, and a lot of them were even holding mystic scrolls and mystic arms.

The Ye's were aware they were not at a disadvantage.

Three years ago, Ye Wei acquired a large amount of treasures from Bloodmist Valley, most of which he gave to his family. Since then, his family was actually richer than the Big Three and had more treasures in their vault than even Green Moon City's City Lord.

Ye Zhong's body became tense, he lifted his arm and signaled his men to stand down. He knew the situation was more complicated and delicate than it appeared to most. Although he was aware that the Ye's might win, it was a risk he dared not to take.

'Grandpa put these people's lives in my hands! Every single one of these one hundred and fifty Warriors is a part of the family's foundation, we cannot afford to lose any of them. Du Ji was a five star condensed prime

Warrior, if the Ye's were to win, they would have to keep the Du squad's leader under control, which could not be done without sacrificing lives for it .

The consequence was too dire, Ye Zhong had no way to afford the loss, nor could the family afford to lose the loved ones they've invested time, care and resources on. After a fight like that, it would take the family more than thirty years to recover.

'The Du family is clearly trying to turn the Lu's against us. I can not make their wish come true and I shall not start a bloodshed here, right by where my ancestors were buried. They shall not step foot on the hill and they shall not shed their filthy blood here!'

Ye Zhong coldly stared at Du Ji, calculating, trying to figure out ways to counter the threat.

"Ye Zhong, kid, the Du family will not violate the the Lu's orders, however I do know that we right now are standing on rightfully belongs to your family." Du Ji's rolled his eyes, chuckled and said: "I am going to give you one chance for you to prove your worthiness. If you are serious about protecting your ancestors' resting place, I want you to take three punches for me! If you agree, I will order my men to back off and leave this hill alone! If the Lu's will ask us what happened I will make something up so they would let you off."

"So, what is it gonna be? Will you take three punches?" Du Ji strode forward and glared at Ye Zhong, putting him under more pressure in the tight situation.

The burial hill was the Ye's land, Du Ji could feel that Ye Zhong would not decline the offer. 'Ye Zhong would not refuse the only easy way out for the Ye if they wanted to keep their ancestral land's integrity without harming anyone of the Ye's Warriors.'

Du Ji's smug smile was growing wider, he had already calculated the next steps. When Ye Zhong agreed, he was going to strike the young cultivator with no mercy.

'I can pretty much destroy your body with one punch! You will never

walk again!’ There was nothing more the five-star condensed prime Warrior wanted than to destroy their rival family’s future.

“Fine, you’ve got yourself a deal!” Said Ye Zhong in a low tone. He nodded heavily, sighed and stepped forward

“Brother Zhong, don’t fall for this trap! He just wants you dead! Don’t forget that he is a lot stronger than you are! Don’t expose yourself to danger like this!”

“Brother Zhong, I know it’s important to guard the family’s ancestral land, but don’t sacrifice yourself like that, guarding what the forefathers left us is a duty all of us must oblige.”

None of the Ye’s could stay calm, they talked over one another after Ye Zhong spoke.

“Don’t say anything!” Ye Zhong grunted low and loud to catch everyone’s attention. He was aware of Du Ji’s intentions and had sent a messenger back to the Ye mansion since the Du’s started troubles at the bottom of the burial hill. He was now just buying time, hoping the messenger had already reached the Patriarch and that help was on the way.

“Good boy, I admire your courage. Here comes the first punch!” A grim smile appeared on Du Ji’s face. He opened his hand wide and casually flicked his fingers, his Qi rushed out together with sequences of runes.

“Zoom!”

The runes flickered faintly as a huge fiery red fist appeared. The air began to ripple while waves of heat emanated from the fist.

Under Du Ji’s command, the fist flew towards Ye Zhong, dropping on top of him like a burning meteor.

‘Low-level Myst stance, Scarlet Flame Fist!’ The cold brutal smile on Du Ji became bigger.

Du Ji, the five-star condensed prime Warrior was much stronger than Ye Zhong and he knew that, but even so, he decided to use one of his

strongest attacks right away.

A low-level Myst stance used by a five-star condensed prime Warrior was not something Ye Zhong could defend himself against.

Chapter 164: Ye Wei Strikes Back

The fist gained more and more momentum while it was falling fiercely at Ye Zhong. As it was approaching its target, the whistling in the air intensified and became a loud rumble.

All the fallen leaves on the ground dried out completely and turned to powder.

Ye Zhong frowned at the roaring flame wrapped around the fist. He knew that Du Ji was much stronger than him; nevertheless, he didn't expect him to use such a powerful stance.

'Du Ji is using his full force. If this heavy Myst stance strike hits me, I will be gravely injured; that is if I manage to live!' Ye Zhong anxiously thought.

'High-level Spirit stance – White Tiger's Assault!' Ye Zhong bit his lips until he tasted hints of metallic sparkles in his blood. There were no signs of reinforcements on the horizon. He had no other choice but to rely on himself.

"Zoom!"

Sequences of runic patterns lit up, intertwined, and suddenly, a spectral tiger appeared in the air.

"Roar!"

The spectral tiger roared at the sky. The tiger swiftly stretched his legs and promptly lunged forward at the approaching fiery fist in the air.

Although the tiger's strike was ferocious, its power was stopped the exact moment Du Ji's fiery fist connected. The spectral beast faded and crumbled in the incinerating heatwave.

Ye Zhong's White Tiger Assault and Du Ji's were both low-level Myst stances. However, powered by a five-star condensed prime Warrior, the Scarlet Flame Fist reigned superior. The unreserved lethal punch did not slow down at all after crushing the big cat.

The flame fist continued to enlarge in Ye Zhong's eyes while approaching with unbelievable speed. Ye Zhong quickly leaped backwards. Using a protecting stance to envelop his whole body, he was ready to face this attack. He would never let the Du's set foot on his family's grounds.

Just as the fist was about to land on Ye Zhong's chest, a blurred figure appeared in mid-air. It brought Ye Zhong ten meters away from the fist's course and saved him from the horrifying attack.

"Bang!"

The fiery fist fiercely struck the dust. A loud rumble echoed throughout the mountains. The whole forest shook, birds flew in fear, and land animals ran for cover. When the debris settled, a ten meters wide pit appeared on the ground.

"Ye Wei!" Du Ji's face turned ashen. He coldly stared at the shadowy figure next to Ye Zhong.

Ye Wei interfered at the absolute last moment. His cousin Ye Zhong would have been lying dead in that pit right now if he was just a tenth of a second slower.

Ye Wei, being Master Yi's only legacy apprentice and being the hero who fought a powerful demon at the Ning City tournament, was a renowned person in Green Moon City. His accomplishments spread so fast Du Ji heard all of the news surrounding Ye Wei at a restaurant. Through other guests' chitchat, he gained an understanding of Ye Wei before he was told the news by the Du family's scouts.

While the smoke and dust settled down, Ye Wei casually removed the dirt from his robe. He then glared fiercely at Du Ji.

The Ye family were always the top priority for Ye Wei. All of his heart belonged to his roots. At the threat of the Lu family, he had to be cautious and patient, but he would not tolerate Du's terrorizing.

"Ye Wei, like I said to your cousin, I was ordered by the Lu family to check these grounds! Are you sure you want to confront the Lu's?!"

Shouted Du Ji. He was irritated by the youngster's interruption.

Du Ji shivered under Ye Wei's cold gaze. He knew he could not stop Ye Wei by force, therefore resorted to threatening his family. 'Hmph, it seems this kid doesn't dare to mess with the Lu's', Du Ji mischievously concluded.

"It was the Lu's elders order. We are not going to disobey, and we are going to explore this land even if it's your family's burial hill. You can't afford to be responsible for holding us down here, can you?"

Du Ji stood still as Ye Wei slowly approached him step by step. 'What if those rumors are right, and this kid was able to defeat that demon?!' A trace of fear flashed in his eyes, 'I once fought a demon at the same level too, and if it wasn't for the Patriarch's intervene, I would surely have died.'

Feeling threatened, Du Ji spoke unwillingly in a soft voice, "Us Du's, just like your family, are from Green Moon City, ordered and used by Lu family. We are forced to do this just as you are. If you let us continue, we give you our promise that everything will be left intact on your grounds. If you decide to stand in the way, we have no other choice but to report your disobedience to the Lu's."

'So you are respecting us now?' Ye Wei surmised. He was disgusted by Du Ji's attitude. Smiling disdainfully, Ye Wei stated, 'If you really did respect us, how do you explain what you tried to do to my cousin?'

'Ye Zhong is just a one-star condensed prime Warrior. Du Ji clearly wanted to kill him and then immediately retreat, so he could bring the Lu's to exterminate my family!'

'Respect? You wouldn't even think about respecting anyone if I was not here, opportunistic snake!'

Ye Zhong was smart enough to understand Du's intentions. He used the voice transmission technique to talk to Ye Wei in private, "They want to destroy our family; this won't end neatly. If I let Du Ji go, the first thing he will do is to complain to the Lu's! That means they might bring havoc to the burial hill.'

Ye Wei's head was spinning. He tried to think a way out of this mess. His ultimate duty was to defend his ancestral grounds for future generations of Ye family.

Suddenly, Ye Zhong's voice sounded in Ye Wei's mind, "Ye Wei, if you take Du Ji, I will be able to take out the rest. We have some powerful men with us. They won't just stand and watch. These are our ancestral grounds, and we must defend them!" Ye Zhong had heard about Ye Wei's achievements in Ning City and believed his cousin, surely the strongest cultivator of the family, was strong enough to take control of the situation.

Ye Wei was uncertain, 'Cousin Zhong, You want us to kill all the witnesses?'

Ye Wei had never killed an innocent before. He was hesitant. Even though it was Du family members in front of him, it would still be murder. Furthermore, committing a sinister act of that scale would leave marks on his mind, a dark chapter will never be beneficial to his ability to focus when he would cultivate.

The situation was urgent. Ye Wei knew he couldn't just keep thinking about the consequences. One Du escapee would mean the end of his family. He had to help his cousin, "No, this isn't fair. If we have to kill, I cannot let you do all the dirty work," Ye Wei looked determined. It appeared there was no other choice.

"Ye Wei, let me do this. Your talent is extraordinary, and you are the hope and future of our family. As long as you deal with Du Ji, I should be able to take care of the rest. You don't even need to kill him, rather, just keep him under control. I am ready to do the rest.' Ye Zhong said earnestly. He made a hand signal, and Ye's men who surrounded the Du's squad dispersed.

"Little Wei, don't give Du Ji a hard time. He's almost peeing his pants; in the end, he is in a way innocent. He is just following his patriarch and the Lu's orders. I would do something similar in his position."

'This has to be done clean! No one, absolutely no one, can escape!' Ye

Zhong laughed. Then he spoke to Du Ji, “Hey, we understand the Du family’s situation, and you can’t really just leave our ancestral land unsearched.”

Ye Zhong was trying to gain some time and draw Du Ji’s attention away from Ye Wei.

“But there is a requisite,” Ye Zhong smiled. He narrowed his eyes as he started to approach Du Ji, “You have to withstand three blows, from my little cousin, to prove that you are worthy, then I will let you search the...”

Du Ji was not a fool. Seeing both Ye Wei and Ye Zhong approach, he was aware something was up. ‘They want to kill us all. These Ye brothers are ruthless, like the patriarch warned me.’ He felt threatened, however, the five-star condensed prime Warrior knew better than to panic.

“I will let the Lu’s decide!” Du Ji responded before Ye Zhong finished his sentence. Ye Wei and Ye Zhong heard a sound of a scroll being torn.

“Woosh!” hundreds of runes burst out of the scroll. Empowered by Du Ji’s Qi, the runes formed a yellow beam of light that broke through the thin night mist. The beams transformed into two huge letter. The surname «Lu» appeared in a starry sky in an eye-catching shade of gold.

Du Ji used one of the scrolls provided by the Lu family. The flare is visible within a radius of one hundred miles. All the leaders of the martial family squads were given one, including Ye Zhong. If someone would use it, it would notify one of the Lu’s ten-star condensed prime Warrior on guard around the area.

At this very moment, Lu Zhong was sitting on one of the tree branches many miles away from the Ye’s burial grounds when he noticed the letters. He stood up abruptly, surprised, and hopeful.

“Did they find the Drakehead?!” exclaimed Lu Zhong excitedly. He hurriedly used a transportation stance and turned into a flash of light. He moved instantly towards the spot indicated by the signal.

Lu Feng’s cultivating was disturbed by a small explosion. He opened his eyes. “Ehm...?” At the quiet pond, he was also able to see his family name

spelled in the starry sky.

He frowned, slowly stood up still, and stared at the golden letters in the sky. He as well turned into a blurred figure in the dark forest and hurried in the same direction.

‘I would like to see what happened.’ Thought Lu Feng while flying through the mountains.

While the two Lu’s headed to the foothills where the Du’s and Ye’s stood off, Ye Wei and his cousin uncomfortably stared at the night sky, frowning.

The Ye cousins planned to neutralize Du Ji quietly and swiftly. They wanted to attack the whole squad before anyone could notify anyone. Unfortunately, they didn’t expect him to be so alert. It would not be wise for the Ye’s to make a move now the Lu family would be rushing over.

‘Du Ji almost killed my cousin. I cannot let him walk free.’

‘Fortunately, it won’t take me long to destroy this conniving snake.’ Ye Wei curled his fingers. Before Du Ji even saw one rune being drawn, five Peerless Qi Swords were already en route.

Chapter 165: Line

The peerless Qi Swords was building blocks of a Sky stance. Although Ye Wei was far from finishing the Zodiac Sword stance, Du Ji still had no way of defending himself against it.

“The Lu’s men are about to arrive, and you dare to aim your stance at me? You are out of your mind!” Panic flashed in Du Ji’s eyes while he watched the five Qi Sword rapidly coming towards him. ‘You will pay for this when they are here!’

Confronted by sharp edges, Du Ji’s pupils shrunk in sheer nervousness. He reacted quickly and channeled his Qi to defend himself. ‘Low-level Myst stance, Cyan Light Shield.’ His hands were flashing in the air drawing rune after rune, forming a defensive stance. Soon, the rune sequence glowed and transformed its shape; a large light shield appeared in front of his body.

The Du family was once one of Green Moon City’s Big Three. They had a total of four Myst stances, which they passed down through generations since their rise. Two of them were low-level Myst stances and the other two were mid-level. These stances were available only to the patriarch.

Du Ji, a five-star condensed prime Warrior, was in a relatively high position in the Du family. He was able to master both the low-level Myst stances that he could access such as the Scarlet Flame Fist and the defensive Cyan Light Shield.

He was renowned in the city, both as a very powerful cultivator and a master of the two Myst stances. Even if he was only a five-star condensed prime level, his shield was powerful enough to withstand a six-star condensed prime Warrior’s attack.

However, under the edge of Ye Wei’s Peerless Qi Swords, the stance that had stopped countless powerful cultivators, was no more protective than a piece of paper. Ye Wei’s Qi bolts penetrated the green shield effortlessly, dug into Du Ji’s arms, legs and his dantian while the shield was still completely intact.

Ye Wei was showing no mercy for someone who threatened to wipe his entire family from the face of the earth.

“Aaah!” the horrifying sound of Du Ji’s screams sent chills through everyone’s body. His arms, legs, and dantian were ripped, spilling blood all over while Du Ji fell to his knees. The ground beneath him was completely dyed in red.

“I thought we made a deal? You shouldn’t have agreed to my cousin’s suggestion if you are not strong enough to take just one blow?” Ye Wei calmly but sarcastically questioned Du Ji. He had to deal with Du Ji quickly before the Lu’s arrived. ‘He tried to hurt Ye Zhong. It’s only fair he tastes his own medicine!’

‘So, when the Lu’s come I can tell them he agreed to this...’ Ye Wei decided.

Du Ji heard Ye Wei’s words, but he was too weak to react. He finally dropped on the ground and fainted.

‘The Du’s were shocked. Judging from Du Ji’s injuries, they could see that their leader was unlikely to ever stand on his feet again.

This defeat just ruined any chances for Du Ji to continue cultivating. He would be cast aside because of his defeat. His cultivation would wither, and he would be a burden for his family from now on.

‘You deserve every bit of this suffering you will taste for the rest of your pitiful life!’ Ye Wei looked at the Du Ji who was paralyzed on the ground. ‘The moment you wanted to kill my cousin Zhong was the moment you should have been prepared to get killed yourself.’

‘The Ye family was left to the Du’s mercy three years ago. If it wasn’t for Master Yi, we would have been wiped out. However, we are no longer like we were at that time!’ Suddenly, a thunderous rumble sounded. It grew louder and louder as a shadowy figure approached. It was Lu Zhong, a ten-star condensed prime Warrior the Lu family sent to coordinate the search.

Lu Zhong thought that someone had found the Drakehead, so he rushed

as if his life depended on it . He didn't expect to see two troops standing off under the moonlight by a hill.

An angry cry resonated within the night, "My family sent you here to look for treasure not to fight each other!"

"Sir, you have to give us justice! The Ye's disobeyed your commands! They were preventing us from entering the area! They also attacked Du Ji!" One of the Du's Warriors stood forth and knelt before Lu Zhong, "I don't think Du Ji will live if he doesn't get medical attention immediately" he cried as he pointed to his fallen leader.

Lu Zhong surveyed the scene. He could tell he was not at the Drakehead. All he could see was the Du's in a pitiful state, kneeling before him. Seeing Ye Wei, his face ashen and his gaze was sharp as daggers.

"What the hell did you do to him?! He is here under my command!" Lu Zhong's fierce roar froze the Ye's in place and stopped their hearts. His presence oozed anger and crushed towards the Ye's squad.

"If you do not give me a reasonable explanation for these bold and stupid acts, your family will cease to exist in a day's time!" Lu Zhong's eyes finally rested on the Ye cousins standing in front of their men.

'That's Ye Wei!' Mumbled Lu Feng, watching the scene unfold from the wilderness. The memory of the Runamaster's exam suddenly appeared in his mind.

'This kid is really talented. Maybe I still can recruit him after all and fit him into my plan.' Lu Feng's revenge was always the first thought in his mind. The humiliation his mother suffered was not easily forgotten.

Lu family was influential inside and outside Qing state. Lu Feng knew everything these people were capable of, 'I can't stand against them alone. They are capable of sending returned prime Warriors here if they do find the place. However, maybe if this kid joins my side...' Lu Feng was thinking, plotting. He was afraid his family's men would find the Drakehead soon. He needed powerful reinforcement to distract and send people away from the pond. He could not bear the thought of losing it.

Lu Feng needed someone as talented as Ye Wei. Nevertheless, he knew since the Runemaster Union entry exam that Ye Wei still held a grudge for what happened three years ago.

“Ye Wei, you are a complete idiot to challenge Lu Zhong. He might be only a ten-star condensed prime Warrior, but he was known for his madness! He would even interrupt an elder if he heard something he didn’t agree with,” Lu Feng mumbled to himself. He was curious to see how this would unroll.

Lu Zhong’s sister, Lu Rong, was one of the elders and one of the strongest cultivators in the family. She was the reason Lu Zhong was bold, crazy but uncontested by the council of the well established family. She was also the person who vouched for him to be in charge of the operation around North Hill Bay, the area which the Lu’s intel told the council the Drakehead was likely to be.

Lu Rong wanted the council to trust her brother. Thus, if he was successful in locating the Drakehead, he would gain a better, more solid reputation.

‘This time I might be able to get him on my side. I will wait for a good opportunity to reveal myself and help him when he gets in trouble!’ Lu Feng concluded while he watched the Ye’s.

“Wipe out Ye family?!” Ye Wei’s eyes filled with burning rage. Nonetheless, he reminded himself that he must be patient for now. He must handle this situation without causing any casualties to occur. He could always make Lu Zhong pay for those disrespectful words once he became stronger.

“Mister, please be reasonable and listen to what I have to say before reacting hastily. There is no reason for the Ye’s to slow the Lu’s operation down. We were trying to carry out the search carefully at our ancestor’s resting place! I promise you, the Du’s are trying to frame us on the spot.” Ye Wei said calmly.

“Is it so?” Lu Zhong gloomy face slowly turned towards Du Ji, who was laying on the ground in a pool of his own blood.

“This lone hill is my family’s burial ground. The Du’s always kept a grudge against my family due to some recent dispute. They took the chance to make a mess at our ancestor’s graves while they were up there, so we asked them down to talk it out peacefully!”

“There would be no way we let them on our sacred grounds just to watch them destroy everything as they do a rough job! Besides, he almost killed my cousin when my cousin was trying to reason with him. I was then lucky enough to stop him right before my innocent cousin would have lost his life!” Said Ye Wei, doing a great job to sound shaken.

Hearing Ye Wei’s speech, Ye Zhong’s face lit up. The situation wasn’t so bad presented the way his young cousin did. ‘Maybe our ancestral grounds won’t be tainted after all.’

Ye Zhong bowed before Lu Zhong saying “Please, Mister. We just wanted to do a thorough job the most respectful way, for the Lu family’s and for the Ye family’s honor. We had to stand against the Du’s and their unreasonable claims!”

“Please, give us justice!” The rest of the Ye’s joined in.

“The Du family clearly wants to take advantage of the Lu’s. You should remove the black sheep from the herd.” Ye Zhong was trying to sound as indignified as he could, playing along with Ye Wei’s speech. “You don’t want innocent blood on your family’s name right? You have to make an example or people like the Du’s will just bring shame and injustice to our doorsteps!”

“Nonsense!”

“We didn’t even touch the hill because you didn’t let us! Don’t let them fool you!” The Du’s replied, angered by the lies.

Lu Zhong cautiously looked over the two families’ squad standing opposite to each other. He sensed that something strange was going on and though one of the sides wanted to fool him, he did not have any useful evidence to make a fair decision.

Peeking from the side, Lu Feng was amused by this whole situation,

‘This Ye Wei is quite a character. Lu Zhong usually isn’t easily deceived.’

“I will not interfere with the dispute between you! Our task must be completed, so stop wasting my precious time! All of you, come up the hill with me to search this area once more!” Lu Zhong pondered for just a moment then gave his orders, “I want every inch of the bay area dug three feet deep!”

Lu Zhong decided to stay out of the argument, he did not care who was buried under the ground if it was not the Supreme who died around the region centuries ago.

“Yes! That’s a wise decision, Mister!” The Du’s were ecstatic. With the Lu’s backing their cause, they marched up the hill while scornfully looking down on the Ye’s.

Ye Wei, Ye Zhong and the rest were looking somber.

“This hill belongs to the Ye’s, our history and pride were buried on this hill!” Ye Wei said furiously, paused and ground his teeth after saying each word.

Lu Zhong cried out, “I do not care who is buried here. How dare you blocking my way?! He is interrupting a Lu family operation! Kill him!”

Du’s were waiting for this moment, excited to see the Ye family getting destroyed by the Lu’s.

The Ye squad’s eyes went bloodshot, Ye Wei in particular was ready to charge forth. Knowing that their ancestral burial grounds will be stepped on by the enemies, none of them could remain calm.

The Ye’s did not take a move, they all stood still and looked towards Ye Wei.

Although Ye Wei was seldom home, they were all aware that throughout the years Ye Wei had become the family’s soul, a person they all admired.

To everyone on the squad, Ye Wei was as influential as the Ye Patriarch.

Ye Wei extended his fingers, with his Qi Sword he drew a three feet

wide line on the dirt between the Du's and the hill. "Who crosses this line, will be dead!" He shouted.

Chapter 166: Madman

The gust of sharp Qi-fused breeze hit the Du's who stood close by and left fine lines of red marks on the exposed areas of their bodies. Stunned, no one dared to cross the line on the ground.

They didn't think Ye Wei would dare to use force against them in front of a Lu.

"You ignorant kid! Do you want to die?!" Lu Zhong's face twitched in anger, "Like I said. All of you, come up the hill with me to search this area once more!"

Bloodlust was overtaking Lu Zhong's consciousness, his Qi rushed out, fluttered his long robe. Both of his hands disappeared, sequences of runes surged in the air while his hands flashed in the shape of mysterious hand seals.

Rumble!

Lu Zhong's Qi was flowing through the hundreds of runes. Immense surge of power was building up between the earth and the sky, so powerful that all the trees around fell at once, cut to their roots, gigantic rocks floated around.

A spectral giant bird of prey flew out from the explosion of the runes. Its cyan wings flapped rapidly. Tornadoes of primal energy swept the ground at the foot of the Ye's ancestral burial hill.

"Could this be?" Lu Feng gasped, still hidden in the dark, shocked by the sight of the shadowy shape. "The Seal of Cyan Hawk, high-level Myst stance!" Lu Feng mumbled, looking horrified, "He used this stance once to defeat a peak ten-star condensed prime Warrior with ease. Should I really intervene before it's too late for Ye Wei?"

"Lu Zhong going in for the kill!" Lu Feng always knew that Lu Zhong was an old maniac but didn't expect him to act this hysterically, the level of ruthlessness was beyond his comprehension.

'All the Lu's that have been sent to Green Moon City were warned not to

mess with Master Yi. Even the elders seem to be afraid of what he might do. Doesn't he know Ye Wei is Master Yi's only legacy apprentice?!

'The pond is nearby, to let the Lu's draw their men here would mean uncovering the Drakehead! This madness needs to stop! We can't have Master Yi and the Lu elders here!' Thought Lu Feng as he rushed out from his cover to stop.

'I acted too late!'

The cyan hawk gradually gathered his full strength, flapped its cyan wings to climb higher into the sky. Its beak suddenly opened and, after a few piercing trills, spewed out round after round of a silver lightning.

Rumble!

The silver lightning rained down mercilessly onto Ye Wei and the Ye's men. The earth crumbled while the silvery energy bolts were still mid-air. The cracks on the ground rapidly grew outwards as the hawk's strike accelerated, the whole burial hill shook to the ten-star condensed prime Warrior's powerful stance.

While others were weak on their knees, Ye Wei did not even flinch. When confronted by the bolts of lightning, Ye Wei stomped the ground, and clouds of runes appeared at the bottom of his feet. Riding the clouds of star-shaped rune sequences, Ye Wei's movements became unpredictable. He then fearlessly leaped right into the storm without a second of hesitation.

'These men behind me are my family's foundation and future, I have to protect them!' thought Ye Wei. He was aware that even the edge of Lu Zhong's powerful high-level Myst stance would end the lives of many of these weaker Warriors.

Therefore, Ye Wei couldn't just hide. He was there to defend his family's past, present and future.

'Supernova stance, Second Evolution!' Ye Wei's earnest gaze was set on the lightning storm's center. His body shone golden, Ye Wei's Qi was amplified, burst out of the runes on his bones.

‘Nine-star condensed prime level!?’ Lu Feng’s jaws dropped.

Amplified by the Supernova stance, Ye Wei’s cultivation exploded instantly. The presence of a three-star condensed prime Warrior intensified, compressed and expanded to three times its original size and strength.

‘Now, Selenic Triple-Primal Sword.’

Although inside the lightning storm, Ye Wei was protected by the thick layer of primal energy that oozed out from his skin, his hands danced in the air, guiding his dense Qi into the runes he just drew. From just spots of scattered energy the runes merged and grew, taking the shape of an ancient sword.

Ye Wei barely hesitated, he assessed the situation quickly and figured out that it was necessary to use the Glacial Emperor’s stance.

The ten meters Qi Sword was now infused with the power of Zhoutian Sword Notion and Polaris Academy’s Starshifter Form, the stance now belonged to peak high-level Myst grade.

As the long sword began to shine brighter, Ye Wei’s will-force and Qi were drained completely.

Only returned prime Warriors or above were able to use high-level Myst stances without emptying their Sentients and dantians. Ye Wei was able to use it but it was in no means an easy task for the young cultivator.

‘The rumors were true! This kid is as powerful as a ten star condensed prime Warrior!’ Lu Feng held himself back, stared at the Qi sword in the sky as it fell down and defensively covered his body with a thin layer of energy. His widened eyes were struggling to even blink. ‘Ten-star condensed prime level... But the reports say he was only a three-star condensed prime Warrior!?’

Both the Ye’s and the Du’s were stunned by the teenager’s display of power Open-mouthed, their heads were swinging from left to right and back, trying to track Ye Wei’s figure.

The Qi sword was surrounded by runes arranged in star constellations

patterns. Ye Wei controlled it telepathically, made it tear through the night sky, and the sword, together with the runes, sped towards the silvery lightning storm.

“Boom! Boom! Boom!”

The star-like runes crashed onto the lightning bolts mid-air. A burst of explosive light blinded everyone at the bottom of the hill.

The silvery bolts vanished together with the star-like runes. With fear in his eyes, Lu Zhong watched the Qi sword penetrate the spectral beast like a hot knife into butter.

“Meet your maker!” Ye Wei ground his teeth and watched his Qi Sword as it sank into the cyan hawk.

“Bang!”

A destructive rippling force wave grew and filled the space, as the entire hill disappeared into the bird. The mountains shook and the ground cracked. All the rocks and stones began to float, the trees that broke off started levitating.

All the cultivators were shivering, they huddled up in fear, confused, speechless.

“Rumble!”

Inside the blinding globe of light, the spectral bird and the Qi sword disintegrated. The mix of scattered runes and energy reacted with each other and vigorously exploded.

Both Ye Wei and Lu Zhong were hit heavily by the explosion and sent flying backwards.

Ye Wei's face became pale, a line of blood dripped out of the corner of his lips. Although Selenic Triple-Primal Sword was no weaker than the Seal of Cyan Hawk, the ten-star condensed prime Warrior was good at his favourite stance. Ye Wei sustained some minor injuries.

On the other side, Lu Zhong was shocked by the intense agony, his body was covered with gashes. His clothes were soaked in blood, ‘How did a kid

hurt me this bad!?’

“How can a small city like Green Moon City produce a youngster that powerful!?” Lu Zhong’s eyes glittered, his face turned dark, realizing he might actually lose, ‘The strongest youngster in the Lu family cannot even compare to this kid here...’

‘If I retreat now, I will become a joke!’

“Looks like you need some help!” Lu Feng revealed himself.

“What? Why are you here!?” Lu Zhong frowned, not please to see the bastard child. He never liked that the family decided to recognize Lu Feng’s existence, how the board decided to include the two-star Runemaster as a part of the family.

“Why are you here?” Ye Wei’s face was completely pale, he glared coldly, exhausted. “Are you here to cause trouble again?” ‘This is the man responsible for cousin Zhong’s coma!’

‘Ye Wei, if I assume correctly, your Qi and will-force have been drained? Let me be honest with you, kid, your opponent here, is famous for his recklessness. He once fought a returned prime level elder just because he wasn’t in the mood to listen. You could have been killed here.1 Lu Feng established eye contact with Ye Wei, his voice transformed into thin strands of Qi and the words sounded in Ye Wei’s mind..

“Pfft, then I will kill as much as I can before I fall!” Ye Wei replied with the same voice transmission technique, ‘What are you planning now, Lu Feng!’

“Stop being stubborn, what do you get out of your family’s demise!? I can actually help you here!” Lu Feng shook his head and said.

“You? Help? Like how you helped the Du family three years ago? You are a Lu, just state your damn intention!” Ye Wei sneered.

“Ye Wei, I admire you. With your talent, it is just a matter of time before you become a returned prime Warrior. I am sure by now you’ve heard how the Lu’s exiled my mother. I hate them as much as you do!” Lu Feng sincerely looked at Ye Wei, “I plan to wipe out the Lu’s in the frame of

three years, and I can't do it all on my own."

"Furthermore, I will offer you one of my secrets. I know a spot where you can cultivate more efficiently. I am the only person who knows the exact location of a Drakehead very close to where we are right now!" Lu Feng was desperate, he replied quickly.

"You know of a Drakehead?" Ye Wei's pupils dilated, 'So that's why you wanted to take over North Hill Bay!'

"I do and I am willing to share that information with you if you are to join force with me. Just one condition, you will have to make a heavenly oath and swear you will not tell anyone about the Drakehead!" Lu Feng was talking quickly. 'Just say yes you idiot, you are going to die otherwise!'

Lu Feng knew that if he was to team up with a strong cultivator like Ye Wei, the Lu's might not ever find what they were looking for. 'As much as they hate saying it, even the Lu's are a bit scared of Master Yi and the Runemaster Union behind him. Come on Ye Wei, just do what is right!'

Chapter 167: Joint Force

“Lu Feng, I do not wish to follow you! However, you are welcome to hold back the Lu family if you hate them this much!” Ye Wei had to make the right decision here. “I will aid you. But I do not wish to have anything to do with Du’s! I feel like I’ve betrayed what’s good in me just having to consider siding with you!”

“Since the Lu’s came to Green Moon City, the Du’s decided they should be the two Lu elders’ dogs, I would love to get rid of these cowards, just let me deal with the Du family! And, if we are going to work together in anyway, I need us to make a heavenly oath as soon as possible!” Lu Feng’s brows rose and continued: “Because I can’t trust you either!”

Lu Feng also knew how valuable Ye Wei was to him. ‘A sixteen years old three-star Runemaster, a kid who can fight a ten-star condensed prime Warrior, one of the God’s Seven, we will complement each other and no one will be able to stand in or way after the heavenly oath!’

“Okay, but let’s not waste time, as soon as we deal with this madman, we will make a heavenly oath.” Ye Wei nodded, although him and Lu Feng had an unfriendly past, he was ready to put it behind him, ‘Desperate time calls for desperate measure, there are more important things than revenge. I will have to put my grudges to the side for now to live.’

Ye Wei nodded gently. This wasn’t exactly what he wanted, but the Lu’s were their common enemy after all.

‘Good that he agrees... This kid is too talented and with the aid of the Drakehead he will become even more powerful! But as long as we are bound by the oath I have nothing to be afraid of when he becomes something I have no chance of controlling!’ thought Lu Feng, excited and at the same time terrified.

They quickly finished their conversation through the voice transmission technique.

Lu Feng paced slowly towards Lu Zhong and whispered just three things, “A three-star Runemaster. One of the God’s Seven. Master Yi’s

only legacy apprentice.”

“What?! What did you just say? He is who’s what?” Lu Zhong’s heart skipped a beat. He frowned, and his eyebrows almost stuck together.

During the fight, it became clear to Lu Zhong that the Ye Wei had been trained well, he could see the teenager’s fighting techniques were advanced, but he never realized he was fighting a Runemaster.

Just the titles were enough to provoke Lu Zhong’s fear. If he had harmed Ye Wei there, he would have had to stand trial not only in front of the Green Army but also the Runemaster Union for the untolerated crime of harming a potential leader of mankind. ‘Even if I ignore all these people behind the kid, am I really able to kill him? I’ve never bled this much in a fight.’

Lu Feng saw how Lu Zhong’s face changed. He decided to strike the iron while it’s hot. He chuckled and said in a laughing voice, “You can beat this kid easily, I mean, you are a ten-star condensed prime Warrior, that’s exactly why the Du’s want to use you to deal with the Ye’s! I can take over and do the search myself with the Ye’s to make sure that the job is done properly while the Du’s will stay down here! You can take the time to rest and recover from your injuries and watch over these cowards.”

‘I guess I should give this bastard a try, he seems knowledgeable.’ Lu Zhong liked what he was hearing. He patted Lu Feng trustingly on the shoulder, “Indeed. Like you said, this kid is very talented. You may take care of your ancestral lands. This young Runemaster earned it.”

His sight finally fell onto the Du’s, “All of you are now under the command of Lu Feng. Do not dare disobey him! Or you will have to deal with me!”

Lu Zhong knew that if the fight went on, he would anger a lot of powerful men and probably even face exile. He therefore took his opportunity to step down and pass the responsibility over to Lu Feng, stepping away from the heat as quick as he could. ‘I never thought I could trust this lovechild kid, I would have dug myself in a hole if he didn’t help me in time!’

“I would like to apologize. I hope, you and your family can forgive my recklessness”, Ye Wei casted his eyes towards Lu Feng, playing along.

“It was my privilege to fight such a talented youngster! And that was enough fighting for today! Come join me and Lu Feng for a drink, we should celebrate instead!” Lu Zhong was trying to unkink the misunderstandings. Knowing Ye Wei could one day be an influential person, he didn’t want or need more conflicts.

“Such hospitality and this is not even your home, I wouldn’t dare declining,” smiled Ye Wei. He then looked to the side and winked at his cousin, “Ye Zhong, would you please take the rest of the Ye’s and also Lu Feng with you so we can finish the search of this hill. Be quick, we don’t want to miss the Lu’s family feast and Lu Feng needs to join us for a drink before eating!”

“Alright then. Let’s go!” Ye Zhong was confused by sudden request from Ye Wei to let Lu Feng help them search the grounds. But he knew his cousin would know better than put their family at risk, so he faithfully followed the lead.

“Lu Zhong! Are you going to leave Du Ji here? He was attacked by the Ye’s! We demand justice!” The Du’s were dumbfounded by the development, craved revenge.

Do Ji was a great cultivator and one of the strongest in the Du family. Besides, the Du’s used to be the Big Three of this city, they had never been treated like this.

“Humpf, I have heard about the shady things your family did three years ago when the elders briefed us about Green Moon City. Furthermore, it’s none of my business if this useless puppet decided to mess with someone he can’t handle!” Said Lu Zhong and chuckled disdainfully. His cold glare like daggers landed on the Du’s squad.

Ye Wei looked at the Du’s. ‘I had to show my strength and had Lu Feng talk this out for me, if not for him I would have been in trouble now! Ha, why do you Du’s think you can convince this madman at all? Lu Zhong would not show mercy, not to puppets.’

“No, not puppet, more like a dog.” Said Ye Wei. The Du stared back at Ye Wei, but didn’t dare to say anything further.’ The Lu family is clearly favouring us. If the Du’s won’t stand back right now, they might lose more than their squad leader.’

Du’s cold glares were piercing Ye Wei, the sole reason why they didn’t succeed in their mission and the man who paralyzed a valuable asset of the Du family.

Ye Zhong and the rest started moving towards the hill. This storm had finally passed.

Ye Wei then told his cousin to return to the camp and he followed Lu Feng, away from the burial hill.

The two young Runemasters found a quiet spot close by, stood together on a peak and made sure they weren’t followed. Neither of them spoke a word. Lu Feng’s robe flattered, the cold breezes whistled between the hills and the mountains.

Ye Wei looked calmly towards Lu Feng, ‘He wasn’t lying about the Drakehead. But how did he find it in the first place?’ He appeared calm but his mind was restless, trying to find answers, explanations.

‘I guess it doesn’t matter as long as the Lu’s cannot find the Drakehead. Me and Lu Feng will be able to control the Lu’s for now. I think I made the right decision’

“Don’t you want me to tell you more about the Drakehead?” Lu Feng seemed to read Ye Wei’s mind with his cold glance, “As soon as we’ve made the heavenly oath, I will take you there.”

‘Ye Wei’s strength was comparable to a ten-star condensed prime Warrior. I cannot match him,’ Lu Feng remembered how he couldn’t sense Ye Wei’s Qi and wondered if the teenager had already recovered from fighting Du Ji.

“What are we waiting for then?” Ye Wei replied

“We solemnly declare, that we mean well to each other!” They said in unison and held each other’s arm.

“I shall not expose the location of the Drakehead in any way.” Ye Wei swore.

“I shall not harm the Ye’s in any way.” Lu Feng followed.

“Come with me!” Lu Feng felt reassured and led the way.

Ye Wei effortlessly kept up, the closer they were to the pond the more Ye Wei appreciated his old rival’s honesty, ‘Lu Feng really knows!’

As they were reaching the pond, an incredulous look spread over Ye Wei’s face, “How did you find this place?!” He said.

“A few years ago, I was told about my past, I ran away from what I thought was my family, just to have some time and space so I could clear my mind. I accidentally wandered into North Hill Bay, and found the Drakehead.” Lu Feng answered, pointing at the pond.

“These past years I have been investing my time and effort onto rune knowledge, not much onto actually cultivating. However I was able to breakthrough to become a four-star condensed prime Warrior, which I am actually very proud of, considering my age.” Lu Feng looked at the small ripples on the pond, his lips curled up to a self-disapproving smile, “It’s nothing compared to what you’ve achieved of course...”

Lu Feng had always been confident with his talent, especially since he discovered the Drakehead, nobody in his circle could challenge him.

But when he met Ye Wei, his world turned upside down. Meeting a sixteen year old boy, who was able to better him at the Runemaster Union entry exam, made him reevaluate life. Meeting Ye Wei for the second time, Lu Feng was completely humble before the three-star Runemaster who managed to go even while fighting a ten-star condensed prime Warrior.

‘Ye Wei, the boy with red Sentient... You deserve the Drakehead more than I do,’ thought Lu Feng. Comparing himself to Ye Wei, he suddenly felt unworthy. He could no longer be proud of any of his accomplishments.

Although Lu Feng had planned his revenge for long, he realized he was

still not ready to take on the Lu's, 'Is three years really enough? Can I keep the Drakehead from the Lu's while trying to assemble my own crew?'

If the Lu's were not desperately trying to discover the Drakehead, Lu Feng would have had all the time he needed to harvest its power and, as he planned, become an influential figure within the family.

However, even though the Lu's didn't know the exact location of the Supreme's resting place, they were still aware that it was nearby Green Moon City. It would not take them more than two or three years to figure out the rest with the resources they had access to.

Once they found the sacred place, Lu Feng would have lost his only way to avenge his mother.

His desire to recruit Ye Wei was based on his fear of not being able to achieve his goal on his own, so he would rather share the sacred place with the powerful kid that would be his ally, if the kid too, wished to keep it a secret.

"You and I are like Yin and Yan, dark and light! We will complement each other and will be able to delay their search for at least a year, maybe two if we are lucky."

"Even I don't plan to mess them up before three years of preparation. It's impossible for me to become strong enough to physically challenge the Lu's elders. They were the people that made my mother suffer!"

"I was lucky to meet you! Ye Wei, you are the most talented person I've ever seen. Even the best cultivators in Lu's family are not superior to you."

"Within three year, I definitely think that you will be able to challenge the Lu's! I don't want much for myself. I just want to avenge my mother. I can't let them torture her any longer! The Lu's have to pay for what they did!" Lu Feng fiercely ground his teeth.

"Do not worry. We have made a heavenly oath. If you decide to challenge Lu's in three years, I won't just stand and watch." Ye Wei was feeling Lu Feng's hatred towards the Lu's.

‘He did save our family’s squad today. Is it fair? Should I just let the past go?’ Ye Wei suddenly realized.

Chapter 168: Depth

Ye Wei and Lu Feng went on and discussed ways they could manipulate the Lu family, and how they should keep the search teams out of the heart of North Hill Bay. After briefly agreeing, they initiated their plan and began to cultivate.

Ye Wei negotiated to retain his recently established schedule; he would train by the pond during the daytime while tracking the Lu's movements, and lastly he would kept an eye on the Ye's squad during the nights. Lu Feng would do the opposite. When either of the partners saw signs of the Lu's men nearing the Drakehead, they would set up diversions, even releasing wild beasts they captured, near the Lu's camps; as a result, Lu's men would alter their paths.

A few days time drifted past in a blink, Ye Wei had consolidated his cultivation, so that he could focus on his next breakthrough to four-star condensed prime level.

Lu Feng admired Ye Wei's cultivation speed. He was envious of the talent he saw before him. Nonetheless, he was oblivious to the fact that the Supreme's cultivating formula was in play. Ye Wei's talent didn't really affect his cultivation speed in comparison.

"Hey Lu Feng, you have been cultivating here for four years now, right? Be honest, have you ever seen the sacred mark?" Ye Wei sat next to the pond and sincerely asked Lu Feng as he was coming to the Drakehead for his turn to watch the pond..

"I tried looking for it, but I have had no luck." Lu Feng shook his head. He then pointed at the pond, "however, try going closer to the pond."

'My body is absorbing primal energy the quicker I get close to it?!' Ye Wei stared curiously at the calm surface, "could the center of the Drakehead be inside the pond?"

"I had the same exact thought. This pond looks ordinary but actually it is not." Lu Feng spoke as he walked towards the body of water, "I have dived in many times, more than I could remember. The first hundred feet

was easy to dive into, but the deeper I swam things got scary. The water below that mark was drastically colder. I felt as if my soul was freezing!” Lu Feng explained solemnly to Ye Wei.

‘Your soul was freezing? What do you mean?’ Ye Wei frowned. His face showed an air of confusion. He could see that the pond water was flowing, ‘it’s not frozen, and even if it was, a condensed prime Warrior like you could easily resist cold temperature.’

The setting sun caught Ye Wei’s attention. The Ye’s men were in North Hill Bay where frequent reports of wild beast were spotted. He began to worry about Ye Zhong’s safety.

“Lu Feng, would you mind watching over the Ye’s men just for tonight?” Ye Wei quickly glanced at the darkening sky and spoke to Lu Feng on the other side of the pond.

“Okay, just be careful though.” Lu Feng understood Ye Wei’s intention. The two could read each other much better now because they trained and saw each other everyday.

“Ye! Of course.” Ye Wei gently nodded. “We’re sitting on the Drakehead. I would like to learn more about this place. If we could find the sacred mark, we could start collecting and hiding the treasures before anyone else does.”

A sacred mark would appear in each Drakehead after a Supreme Dragon Belt’s birth. This mark, the key to unlock the Draketorsal’s treasures, was however nowhere to be found, not even by Lu Feng, a sharp young mind with a powerful body to match.

“You can relax and do your thing. I promise no beasts and no men will touch a hair on any of the Ye’s head under my watch!” Lu Feng readily assured Ye Wei. “Just remember to cut me a share if you find out where the treasures are. I don’t ask for much, just thirty percent is all.”

“Don’t worry, You can relax too! I will count you in. what am I going to do with all the treasure anyway?” Ye Wei replied calmly. “We are working together now, so we should be fair. If we keep thinking selfishly we will never be efficient in the time of our collaboration.”

‘There are no eternal enemies. As long as we can find a way to benefit each other, we should continue helping each other.’

When the night finally fell, Lu Feng left the pond. With the starlight’s guidance, he tracked down the Ye’s squad and began his duty as the silent guardian.

At the Drakehead, Ye Wei took off his robe. He grabbed a large green boulder between his arms and dove into the pond.

“Slosh!”

Ye Wei held tight onto the boulder. He rapidly sank deeper and deeper into the watery unknown, causing some turbulence in the pond.

‘I must be around hundred feet deep now.’ Ye Wei pondered. Everything was still rather normal; though, it was so dark he could not even see the boulder he was holding. However, he was still able to navigate with his extraordinary soul sensitivity.

Ye Wei continued diving down deeper into the pond. The boulder’s weight accelerated his descent. Just as he broke the hundred feet mark, a sharp, overwhelming freezing sensation attacked every inch of his skin.

‘How could the water become this freezing cold just like that? This is colder than sea water during the frozen winters! How can this water even stay liquid? Ye Wei’s brows tightly locked. The three golden cracks on his dantian began vibrating and released a vast surge of Qi, filling and warming his entire body, erasing the numbness from the cold.

‘There is something strange in this pond, and I need to go deeper to investigate!’

Ye Wei dived deeper and deeper while continually holding onto the weight of the boulder.

‘Hundred and ten feet!’

‘Hundred and twenty!’

Once he reached thirteen feet deep, the boulder froze. It started to shake, and in a few seconds, it was covered with cracks. Finally, the stone

boulder shattered and disintegrated.

Ye Wei slightly moved from side to side. 'It's impossible to maneuver in this depth and temperature, even the boulder froze and cracked from the pressure!' Ye Wei's face was paler than ever; his lips became blue from the blistering cold. He tried to keep his body warm, but his blood flow was drastically slowing down. Somehow, even the body of a three-star condensed prime Warrior was not strong enough to combat this cold.

'I don't believe it! I am stronger than this!' Ye Wei clenched his teeth even harder and drew a sequence of runes with his shaking fingers.

'Supernova stance, first evolution!' The golden light on Ye Wei's bones flowed, shone through his body and lit up the pond's frozen depths. He gained the body strength of a seven-star condensed prime Warrior.

'I need to keep on going!'

The Qi in Ye Wei's body was accelerating, within his meridian systems. In turn, it marginally kept up with how quickly his body was freezing.

'One hundred and thirty feet!'

'One hundred and forty feet!'

'One hundred and fifty feet!'

When Ye Wei reached one hundred and fifty feet, the water temperature suddenly dropped again. His joints showed signs of freezing since the Qi flow in his meridians slowed down as well. The energy began to solidify; at the same time, Ye Wei's skin was glowing in an unusual purple colour.

'My body is at the same state as a seven-star condensed prime Warrior, and I still cannot resist the temperature. What is the source of this cold?' Ye Wei narrowed his eyes.

Now, Ye Wei's bones became rigid from layers of frost accumulating on the surfaces of his internal organs. A dull pain throbbed over his whole body.

'If I keep going like this, I will definitely freeze to death!'

'Supernova stance, second evolution!' Nevertheless, he refused to give in.

“Rumble!”

His Qi was further compressed and amplified, strengthening his body to that of a nine-star condensed prime Warrior.

‘Much better!’

Wrapped in coats of thick primal energy, Ye Wei was able to dive even deeper despite the increasing pressure.

After the second evolution, Ye Wei descended all the way to one hundred and seventy feet depth before his Qi started to solidify once again.

‘I think I am still far from the bottom!’ and I still haven’t found anything. I don’t think I can keep going on like this.’ Ye Wei shook his head and took a hard turn to the opposite direction. He swam towards the sky and the fresh air.

Once he reached about one hundred and twenty feet below the pond’s surface, Ye Wei canceled the Supernova stance and his body returned to the state of a three-star condensed prime level.

Feeling threatened by the water’s chilling temperature, Ye Wei accelerated his Qi flow to warm up his meridians and therefore his body. The quicker his Qi circulated his body the thicker and denser it eventually became.

‘The pond is bone chilling. I think I can attempt a breakthrough down here where my Qi flows quicker.’ During this time, Ye Wei was close to breaking through; how he could cultivate most efficiently was always one of his main concerns.

‘If I could breakthrough to become a four-star condensed Warrior, I would be as strong as a ten-star condensed prime Warrior under the effect of Supernova stance second evolution!’

‘Before my next breakthrough, I am not confident about being able to defeat a ten-star condensed prime Warrior. Although Lu Zhong was heavily wounded, Ye Wei’s resources were drained. If they were to fight a longer fight, Ye Wei would not have lasted long since he put all of his

strength behind the Selenic Triple-Primal Sword.

‘After my breakthrough, my Sword stance will reach a different level entirely. When that day comes, I should be able to take on even ten-star condensed prime Warriors with the Glacial Emperor’s stances.’

‘Falling Star Form!’ Ye Wei steadied his body deep inside the pond, used the formula to further accelerate the fast-flowing Qi, the energy tamped by the cold, into his dantian.

‘I think my body is absorbing Qi twenty times faster than normal speed! My Sentient is being expanded as well by this freezing surge!’ Ye Wei exclaimed. He sincerely believed the Drakehead was close to the bottom of the pond.

‘I have to breakthrough before I am good enough for any task in my path.’ Ye Wei clenched his fist in the depth of the dark, freezing pond. He used the formula once again, this time to overload his meridians.

The silver moon hung high. Its soft light could not reach where Ye Wei was, but it certainly acted as a torch in the dark for Lu Feng.

Lu Feng had located the Ye’s and decided he should head back to the Drakehead once he took care of the beasts around the area.

While he was on the way back to Ye Wei, he discovered that the Lu’s had assigned a ten-star condensed prime Warrior to North Hill Bay.

“Why did they assign the Du’s to Lu Ren?” Lu Feng mumbled to himself high up a tree. Incognito due to the night sky, a man near Lu Feng was inconspicuous. It took a couple of seconds before Lu Feng recognized a bearded middle-aged man near him.

“Ye Wei, the Lu’s sent another ten-star condensed prime Warrior your way. I am not sure if I will be able to stop this one, please be aware!”

Lu Feng sent Ye Wei a message through his runic badge.

However, Ye Wei being too focused on breaking through, was not aware that Lu Feng tried to contact him.

It was not long before sunrise, Lu Feng became increasingly anxious as

he still hadn't received a reply from Ye Wei. 'What are you doing, don't tell me you got yourself killed. The Lu's just sent two hundred Du's towards the Drakehead's direction! I need you right now Ye Wei!'

Chapter 169: Four

“The Lu’s must have discovered or the Du’s have snitched on the Ye’s! Come on Ye Wei, we can’t afford you to be quiet right now!” Lu Feng could not run the distraction show on his own. North Hill Bay was not the widest stretch of land but it was large. It took the duo a lot of creativity and precise coordination from two separate locations in order to herd the search teams away from the Drakehead in the past few days.

‘Judging by these people’s decisive movement, they do have a clear target! What can I do alone!’ Lu Feng held his runic badge tight, anxiously checking every ten seconds if Ye Wei had replied.

It was not long before Lu Feng realized he couldn’t just spectate in the dark. He ground his teeth, took a deep breath and revealed himself, “Oh Lu Ren! What are you doing here?” He said, acting surprised.

“I could ask you the same question!” Lu Ren frowned and replied. ‘What is this bastard doing here?’ He thought to himself.

“I didn’t think you were assigned to any task for this mission?” The bearded man asked, almost sounding like he was interrogating.

“Incorrect. I was ordered by Lu Zhong to watch over this area. So what brought you here? To my knowledge you were assigned to the east side.” Lu Feng smiled diplomatically and used the information he gathered to his advantage.

Lu Feng continued “I just want the elders to recognize me, so I volunteered and spoke to Lu Zhong. North Hill Bay was my playground when I was a child, I thought I could help. I was tracking a powerful wild beast nearby and came to warn you once I could sense you and your squad’s presence. But if you rather have me gone, I am happy to just mind my own business.”

Lu Feng turned around and continued in a convincingly sad tone, “It’s discouraging sometimes when you just want the best for your family but being treated like dirt instead of being appreciated, I will be on my way. Just take care of yourselves.”

“Did you say there is a wild beast? Was it a wild beast or a pact?” Lu Ren was concerned, ‘Maybe he’d know where the nests are!’

“Lu Feng! Wait!” The rough appearance of the bearded man did not match his nervous voice. ‘If it’s a rare wild beast, I can’t deal with it while babysitting these Du idiots!’

Lu Feng was surprised by how well his hook worked. He wiped his cunning smile off his face before turning around to Lu Ren. ‘I’m glad I came through to you, I was going to ask one of the elders to deal with the rare beast if you would have ignored me...’ He then tried to remember the location of beast nest close, but there was nowhere he could think of.

Lu Feng appeared calm, but he knew there was no way he could make his lie convincing without Ye Wei.

Lu Ren looked at Lu Feng, slightly suspicious, if there were a rare wild beast around this area he had to be cautious. ‘A rare beast can wipe us all out, but shouldn’t I have been briefed about it?’

“Hahaha, Lu Feng, nephew, hold on! You are here anyway, would you lead the way for us to avoid the beast?” Lu Ren hid his cold eyes under a fake smile, just in case Lu Feng was right.

“If there is a need for my services, I will of course assist my family.” nodded Lu Feng, as he replied making himself sound as sincere as possible. ‘Hah, I’ve been waiting to say this line since a minute ago.’

Leading the way gave Lu Feng the opportunity to take Lu Ren and the Du’s squad further away from the Drakehead and also investigate how much Lu’s knew about the position of the Drakehead or if they had a clue at all.

“After you, uncle Ren!” Lu Feng led the two hundred Warriors and started walking away from the Drakehead deviated from their original route. Lu Feng was cautious, he couldn’t just lead them in the completely opposite direction, so he had to go around, in large circles, making sure Lu Ren did not get suspicious while he took them on a sightseeing tour.

“Halt!” After about twenty or thirty miles Lu Feng was immediately

stopped by Lu Ren as he was about to take a turn to make the squad go the opposite direction of where the pond was.

“Thump!” a muffled noise sounded as Lu Ren’s hand landed on Lu Feng’s shoulder, stopping him to walk further away.

Lu Feng’s heart sank, his face went pale, scared to turn around. ‘He knows!?’

“Lu Feng, nephew, you need to adjust our pathing. Of course we want to avoid the wild beast but we need to move towards that direction”, said Lu Ren and pointed towards the burial hill again. The hill that was less than ten miles away from the pond.

“Very well then”. It took all his effort to not sound nervous, while his heart was beating like crazy, ‘Do Lu’s know about this or is it just Lu Ren’s intuition? I hope it’s the latter.’

‘If it’s just Lu Ren’s senses, we can kill him and no one else will find out. But if it was the former, killing him will just trigger the Lu’s.’

Hundreds thoughts flashed through Lu Feng’s mind, pondering every possibility, trying to find a way out, ‘He is a ten-star condensed prime Warrior. Killing him will be difficult, but I think it is possible.’

‘Possible if the kid is here. What is taking him that long?’ Lu Feng got to know Ye Wei better in the few days since they made the oath. He hoped blunt stubbornness did not drown his new ally.

‘No, he should be fine. He is the most talented cultivator I’ve ever met.’ Lu Feng’s cold gaze turned towards the Du’s marching behind them, ‘When Ye Wei comes we will be able to kill Lu Ren, but that means innocent witnesses will have to die.’

‘Maybe they deserve to die. I’ve treated them well throughout the year, but now the Lu’s are here, they just completely disregarded my existence!’

Under Lu Ren’s pressure, he had no other choice but to take them towards the Drakehead, marching slowly and in circles to avoid the fictional wild beast.

At the pond, the water suddenly became agitated, ripples appeared on its surface, growing bigger and bigger every second. The whole pond trembled as a huge water torrent broke the surface, flew towards the night sky carrying a dark figure.

Ye Wei stood on top of the pillar of water, protected by a bubble of Qi around him, his body was completely dry.

Schmoosch!

The water torrent suddenly exploded, filled the sky with droplets of water, as if a storm just broke out. Ye Wei kept himself in the air, levitating, a hint of smile passed across his face.

“Four-star condensed prime Warrior!” Exclaimed Ye Wei, glad to be alive and excited to have broken through. ‘But let’s not do that again.’

‘Now, when I use the second evolution of Supernova stance, I will be able to get to the level of ten-star condensed prime Warrior easily! There won’t be a lot of people below returned prime level who can rival me in strength!’ Ye Wei smiled, ‘I would like to see Lu Zhong try to fight me now! Ha!’

“Boom!”

Ye Wei slowly landed next to the pond and put his light blue robe on.

‘I broke through in less than ten days here at the Drakehead! This place is magical!’ Ye Wei could now feel a fourth crack on his silver Qi ball within his dantian, smiled joyfully.

‘The Runic badge is shaking, was Master looking for me? Oh, could it be Lu Feng!’ Ye Wei’s low clearance meant that he could only use his badge to speak with people whose will-force was directly registered to his device. The badge allowed Runemasters to communicate using the voice transmission technique but relayed across much larger distances without the need to be in close proximity with the other person.

“Ye Wei! The Lu’s sent a ten-star condensed prime Warrior and they are approaching the Drakehead! Reply immediately as you see this!’ Ye Wei was shocked to hear panic in Lu Feng’s voice.

Ye Wei frowned, nervous, 'The Lu's sent a ten-star condensed prime Warrior? Wasn't Lu Zhong responsible for this area?'

"What is the situation right now? Where are you?" Ye Wei quickly replied using the voice transmission technique through his badge.

"It's not good. The Lu's seem to know something. I am afraid we might need to kill Lu Ren. Are you ready?" After just a second, Ye Wei's Runic badge shook and Lu Feng's voice sounded in his mind.

"Lu Ren?" Ye Wei frowned, 'He was one of the two who gave the Ye mansion a warm visit ten days ago.'

'Lu Ren is just a ten-star condensed prime Warrior, with my current level I should be able to beat him', thought Ye Wei, tightening his fists.

'We cannot let the Lu's find the Drakehead!'

"I am on my way! Good job for holding them there thus far." said Ye Wei to his runic badge as a pair of huge wings appeared on his back. The primal feathers shook, and he sped towards the location given to him by Lu Feng.

About fifty miles away from the pond, Lu Feng, Lu Ren and two hundred Du's kept their search in a valley.

"Uncle Ren, looking for something like this tiny in the wilderness is not an easy task. It surely cannot be done in just one night. Don't you think we should take a break? We will be more efficient when we feel fresh!" Said Lu Feng after receiving Ye Wei's last message.

Lu Ren glanced towards the tired faces of Du's and slightly nodded. The treasure they were looking for was invisible to human eye, they had to spend a lot of their Qi and strength to be able to scan the surroundings for energy disruptions, which was extremely draining, but also necessary.

Having to go through the vast area during all day and most of the night, the Du's were exhausted as they were told to sit down and sense the surrounding with their cultivation formulas every hundred feet they walked.

One of the Du's strongest Warrior, sat himself immediately on the ground after seeing Lu Ren nod to Lu Feng's suggestion and the rest followed. Breathing heavily, they took out their provisions, dried meat and flasks of water, to regain some strength and rest.

The owls were hooting in the forests around the valley, the moonlight casted shadows on the ground. Lu Feng also sat himself down, his eyes slightly squinted, his sharp sense registered the tiniest disturbance in his surroundings

'Ye Wei is nearby!'

Through the runic badge Lu Feng could guess that Ye Wei would be arriving and would be hiding behind the nearby woods. Lu Feng took a deep breath, stood up, took out a flask of wine and with a fake smile on his face walked towards Lu Ren.

Lu Feng took a gulp of wine and offered the flask, "Wine?"

"No." Lu Ren shook his head.

"Fine by me!" Lu Feng smiled, pretended to be embarrassed by the decline and drank flask empty in mere seconds.

"Good wine!"

Lu Feng wiped his mouth and tossed the flask away.

Lu Ren did not suspect anything, sat himself down comfortably to rest.

The broken bottle was the signal for Ye Wei. He agreed to ambush Lu Ren while Lu Feng would deal with two hundred Du Warriors.

"Clang!"

The flask hit the ground and shattered into small pieces. A crisp loud noise echoed through the valley.

Chapter 170: Spirit Flame

Lu Feng turned into a phantom; he rushed towards the Du's two hundred strong men, whizzed through them, and left trails of countless rune sequences in the air.

"Mountain Grasp!" Lu Feng struck without warning. He summoned huge boulders in the shape of a fist, which fell from the sky right onto the Du's. Some of them were still relaxing and sitting down; and even though, they noticed the sudden attack, they were too slow and exhausted to react.

"Rumble! Rumble! Rumble!"

The giant boulders fell on the two hundred warriors. A quarter of them were immediately crushed by the stance. Lu Feng was a peak four-star condensed prime Warrior, and he used all of his strength by trying to eliminate the Du's all at once. Most of them were lucky enough to escape the first wave of such a powerful and unpredictable attack.

"Lu Feng, are you out of your mind?!" Lu Ren widened his eyes in disbelief. "I don't like those dogs either, but they are our family's dogs!"

Over half of the Du's died within seconds of the impact. "What have you done?!" Lu Ren was too slow to react. He could not defend the Du's. Furiously he casted his cold eyes onto Lu Feng. Grunting, he quickly drew runes around himself and turned into a lightning bolt, leaving zig-zags in the dark sky.

Lu Feng's attack was too unpredictable. Even Lu Ren was unable to read the stance in time not to mention the slower and less powerful Du's.

"Stop right now or I will break your limbs!" Lu Ren rushed towards Lu Feng, but his path was suddenly blocked by another figure.

"Ye Wei?!" Lu Ren's lips twitched. His eyes opened wide in awe and confusion. 'Why are you defending Lu Feng!?'

"Just when I thought you were loyal to us, Lu Feng! Thanks for the demonstration of your betrayal!" Lu Ren roared furiously as he figured out Lu Feng was hiding something with the aid of Ye Wei, "I will torture you

until you tell me what is happening!”

His rage passed through his body as he looked down at the smashed corpses of the Du’s; a great surge of powerful Qi burst from his hands and turned into an energy tornado.

The Qi storm swept the ground, the earth cracked in a spider web pattern, and shook the whole valley violently.

‘Lu Ren is much stronger than Lu Zhong!’ Lu Feng’s face suddenly changed as he felt the Lu Ren’s strike grow stronger; he looked worriedly towards Ye Wei, wondering, ‘will this kid be able to defeat him?’

‘Oh well, now there was no turning back. We have to kill all of them. No one can escape; it’s us or them, all or nothing!’

“Take care of the remaining Du’s! I will handle this!” Ye Wei looked quickly towards Lu Feng. His words gave the exiled great assurance.

The runes on Ye Wei’s bones glowed bright, another monstrous burst of Qi swept the valley.

‘What was that? Just a few weeks ago he showed the strength of a nine-star condensed prime Warrior. How did he break through?! I don’t understand. How can this be?’ Lu Feng’s jaws dropped as his body shivered in the dense force-wave emitted by Ye Wei.

‘This kid is just unpredictable in every way!’ Lu Feng was scared of his ally, but he knew there was no time to spare. He produced nine energy globes with another stance.

The balls of Qi turned into nine shadows and surrounded the escaping flocks of Du’s men, quickly killing them off one by one.

“No, you are not running away! Not under my watch!”

Lu Feng was effectively cleaning up the dispersed flock, eliminating the defenseless and panicking Du’s. Meanwhile, Ye Wei was standing against Lu Ren on his own.

‘I need to be quick!’ Ye Wei waved his hands, ten blades of Peerless Qi words burst out from the tip of his fingers. ‘There are more squads

around North Hill Bay if they hear or sense anything we won't survive.'

The Peerless Sword Qi blades was a powerful technique on its own, now, that Ye Wei had the strength of a ten-star condensed prime Warrior. The edge of these blades could easily penetrate the Qi armor of Lu Ren even that they were both at the same cultivation level.

Lu Ren's eyes flashed with terror. He never expected such power to come from a sixteen year old.

"Buzz!"

The blades were approaching Lu Ren. Nevertheless, he did not underestimate his opponent. 'I have to treat him as someone one of my own level or I might die.' His hands started dancing in circles, strands of complex, curved rune sequences appeared and in just a second a shadowy object emerged from the nether.

"Boom!"

In just a blink of an eye, a huge eight cornered prism was created from his Qi. The sharp edges and mirrored sides were reflecting the moonlight, emitting an immense wave of Qi.

The dark prism encaged Lu Ren's body, all ten of Ye Wei's Qi Swords were sucked towards the mirrors on prism sides.

The Qi Swords struck onto the smooth mirror but the prism didn't shatter, instead the swords were stuck onto shining surface. The mirror trapped them like quicksand, nullifying Ye Wei's attack.

Lu Ren slowly exhaled and hid behind the large spectral prism. He felt relieved that he was able to defend himself. 'This kid is very strong!' He thought as he recuperated from the stress brought by the Peerless Sword Qi.

'Lu Ren is afterall a ten-star condensed prime Warrior. I shouldn't expect to kill him right away. At least I pressured him enough, so he already spent a lot of Qi!' Ye Wei told himself as he finished drawing the runes for his next strike.

Ye Wei had another card up his sleeve, the peak high-level Myst stance. He had been practising it for the past three years and even though it still wasn't perfected, he needed it to be able to kill Lu Ren.

Ye Wei needed time to prepare for his ace, therefore he used the Peerless Qi Swords to keep Lu Ren busy, as he did not want the ten-star Warrior to use a flare scroll while he drew the runes for Selenic Triple-Primal Sword.

If Lu Ren used his scroll, everything would be over. Ye Wei, Lu Feng and even the entire Ye family would not survive the Lu's family wrath.

"Rumble!"

Ye Wei injected his Qi into the sequence. The runes turned into a constellation-shaped network, flew high up in the sky, and lit up the whole valley. It then transformed into a three feet long sharp-edged sword.

"Die!" Ye Wei pointed his finger towards his opponent and yelled. His cold voice sent chills over Lu Ren's body. The Qi Sword surrounded by star constellations rushed towards the enemy all at once at an incredible speed.

Supported by Ye Wei's amplified Qi, the long ancient sword's energy presence was twice as strong as when he used it before the recent breakthrough.

Lu Ren gasped in panic, as the sword closed its distance from him. A hundred feet wide pit appeared around his body and kept growing as the sword fell lower. The stance created a large web of fissures as it dug the pit deeper and wider.

"This Sword stance is a high-level myst stance!" Lu Ren was standing right in the middle of the pit. His face lost all of its colour, surprised by incredible strength of Ye Wei's attack.

"Rumble!"

The long Qi Sword with hundreds of runic constellations reached its target. It seemed to everyone at the valley that the whole world shook. A

dusty smoke cloud shrouded the space, and thunderclouds emerged in the night sky. Ye Wei's attack just created a storm.

"Ye Wei's sword attracted the violent energy of nature!"

"A sixteen year old boy's Qi did all of this?! Even the strongest youngster in my Family, Lu Fan, didn't reach this level at the same age!" Lu Ren heart was filled with horror as he felt and saw what Ye Wei was capable of.

Lu Fan wasn't just a strongest youngster in the Lu family, but also the strongest in the whole Qing State. He was known all across Zhou dynasty's reign for being smart and powerful, a true genius. But even he was not capable of using a stance of this scale at the age of sixteen.

"He is way stronger than Lu Fan! How is this even possible?!"

Lu Ren did not expect such a small city like Green Moon to be the birthplace of a terrifying genius. 'I didn't think anyone outside of the three royal families could be this strong, this young...'

To maximize the Selenic Sword's destructive power Ye Wei used the Falling Star form, and guided the primal energy from the surroundings into his strike. 'Falling Star form became a lot stronger since I started training at the Drakehead...' He thought.

Few Du's that were trying to flee from the valley were stunned by the Qi storm, swept off their feet. They knew their doom was near, trembled in fear, 'How could he be so strong?!'

"I remember him! He was the joke between martial families, the red Sentient Student who everyone! What did they feed him?!" The remaining Du's finally realised what a big mistake they made to mess with the Ye family.

In their last moments they hated Lu Feng for turning the Du's against the Ye family three years ago, frustrated that now he was wiping out the Du's with a Ye, oblivious about the fact that they were just collateral damage.

"This guy! He doesn't really need me here!" Lu Feng also saw the Qi

storm created by Ye Wei's stance. He was glad that they didn't remain enemies.

Ye Wei's intense glare fell onto Lu Ren.

"No survivors!" Ye Wei channeled his whole strength, all his Qi went into the Qi Sword that he held so tight.

The sword's size made the strike look much slower than it was. Lu Ren saw the sword's trail but couldn't react in time. It landed right onto the spectral prism.

"Crack! Crack!" The prism cracked from where the ten sword struck, quickly shattering under the pressure of Ye Wei's stance.

"I've underestimated him!" Lu Ren widened his eyes in shock.

The raging Qi was pressing against Lu Ren, his pupils shrunk to the size of a needle's tip. It was too late to defend himself with a stance. His ten-star condensed prime cultivation level was useless against Ye Wei's speed. Instead he took a few scrolls out of his sleeve and immediately tore all of them.

Screens of runes appeared around Lu Ren, forming numerous defensive stances.

However, put before the edge of the long Qi Sword, Lu Ren's last line of defense was almost non-existent. Although slowed by the layers, the sharp edge managed to pierce through all of the protective stances. Lu Ren helplessly watched as it mercilessly burrowed into his body.

"Plop!" Lu Ren's face was pale as a piece of paper, his blood gushed out from his mouth and the bone deep wounds on his body.

Bones were broken, flesh was torn, Lu Ren was covered in blood, barely alive. Although the sword was strong, the defensive stances did absorb a fraction of the sword's momentum.

Ye Wei was levitating, staring at Lu Ren from above. He was panting, his face pale. Even under the effect of supernova stance second evolution, his Qi and will force were drained from using this devastating sword

strike.

“Ye Wei! Stop!”

Lu Feng leaped forth, landed next to Lu Ren before Ye Wei was going to finish his opponent.

“What? Are you changing sides again?” Ye Wei was confused.

“In the Lu family, once a cultivator reaches ten-star condensed prime level, they will be asked to light up a candle light in the clan’s ancestral hall.”

“If the cultivator dies, the fire will die, and the smoke of the dying flame will become the image of what the deceased cultivator saw before death.” Lu Feng looked at Ye Wei and said.

“That was close... Couldn’t you have told me this earlier? My family could be wiped out because of this!” Ye Wei sighed as he pulled back his fist.

Chapter 171: No Survivors

“Before we kill any Lu’s who are above ten-star condensed prime level, we have to take care of a spirit token.” Lu Feng explained while taking a small, green sandalwood box out of his bag.

Lu Feng then reached into Lu Ren’s inside pocket and found what he was looking for, “this sandalwood box can temporarily disrupt the link between the spirit flame in the ancestral hall and the token these Lu’s carry.” He held the small, glowing jade token up high, so Ye Wei could see it.

“You, you cannot kill me!” Lu Ren coughed up blood. His eyes were filled with fear even though he made that bold statement.

Lu Feng curled his lips up and carefully placed the spirit token into the wooden box. His gaze became ice cold. “This is only the beginning.”

“Bang!” The next second, Lu Feng’s fist was inside his uncle’s chest; blood splattered everywhere, especially on Lu Feng. Even at this gruesome, Lu Feng’s bloodstained smile only grew larger.

Ye Wei was not told what exactly the Lu family did to Lu Feng’s mother but from his new partner’s twisted face he could see how much it horribly affected Lu Feng.

“How are we going to do this?” Ye Wei thought. He looked at Lu Feng and could feel the darkness in his partner’s heart, ‘he can see a few steps ahead of me in many things, but I don’t know if I can be friends with him in the long term.’

Ye Wei was not going to leave anything to chance. “The Lu’s cannot know anything about tonight!”

“The sandalwood box works for a month. We’ll say the Du’s were ambushed by wild beasts. In Lu Ren’s case, he had gone missing since the attack.” Lu Feng scanned across the corpses covering the valley’s ground. He spoke coldly.

“Okay.” Ye Wei nodded and mumbled to himself. “A month? What

about after that? You know the Lu's are efficient. They will eventually trace it back to us."

"I know what you are thinking, but we can't do much more." Lu Feng looked at Ye Wei, explaining solemnly. "We should instead be thinking about how we can deceive the Lu's. They were obviously heading to the Drakehead's direction."

"They don't really care about the Du's, but if they have an idea where the Drakehead is, they will keep sending stronger cultivators there, especially now that Lu Ren is 'missing'." Lu Feng paused and continued, "they might even send the returned prime Warriors this way! If worse comes to worst, we will have to let them take the Drakehead for now. Then we would somehow trap and eradicate them at once."

"I don't know if that is good idea. They will just become stronger if they take control over the Drakehead. I think I have a way to deal with the returned prime level elders. Will you go and spy on the Lu's while I prepare myself?" Ye Wei frowned as he spoke. He lifted his head and looked at the frustrated Lu Feng."

"There is no way back now. We should get ahead instead of wasting time to cover our tracks." Ye Wei clenched his fist and said, "the next few days are critical, so make sure you gather as much information as you can!"

"Okay, I will be on my way!" Ye Wei channeled his Qi. He flapped his primal feather wings and rushed towards the Drakehead pond.

"We are still in the dark. We will have slight advantage since the element of surprise is on our side. We just have to be careful, so the Lu's don't know what we are putting into action!"

Lu Feng watched his partner flying away. There was a glint of hope in his eyes. "Please, win this bet. We will all die if we lose."

Lu Feng understood that he could not take on the Lu's soon even if he spent all his time training and cultivating. On the other hand, he knew Ye Wei could. 'He's right though. With my identity, I can get more information than he.' The heavenly oath they made gave him assurance.

After arranging the crime scene to look like the aftermath of a wild beast attack, Lu Feng sped towards the Lu's base.

A few hours after the incident, two of the Lu's condensed prime Warriors investigated the area around North Hill Bay.

"What in the world! What the hell is with Lu Ren?! He was suppose to send someone back to base. He knows better than to be this irresponsible!"

"I know right? This is just outrageous!"

A stinking metallic smell caught both the Warriors' attention. They frowned and entered the bloodstained valley. Both of them began to shake in fear as they found the source of the reeking, overwhelming stench. They saw bits of stomach-turning, ravaged bodies covering the ground together with a few beasts' dead bodies.

"What the hell happened here!?"

"Where is Lu Ren?!"

They investigated the valley thoroughly but could not find Lu Ren's body."

"You don't see him either?"

"No, but even if he is here, I don't think we'd be able to recognize him.."

"The beast might still be around. We have to be on our feet! Let's go back!" One of the condensed prime Warrior said, "if Lu Ren couldn't deal with it, neither can we!"

After doing a brief headcount, the two warriors nervously left the way they came.

Green Moon City, City Lord's castle.

Two returned prime Warriors were sitting still, cultivating. One of them was thin while the other chubby. They were both cultivating using the Lu's specialized formula. When they inhaled, large vacuum bubbles

formed around them, and when they exhaled a faint thundering rumble echoed the whole courtyard.

“Sir, A large pack of wild beasts attacked the Lu Ren’s squad. There were no survivors! As well, Lu Ren was missing!” The two condensed prime level scouts reported. They shivered as they remembered what they saw.

“Did I hear you correctly? No survivors you said?!” The chubby elder’s eyes became bloodshot. Both scouts immediately bowed down, avoided eye contact, and became tongue tied under the immense pressure.

The thinner elder also opened his eyes. He interrogated with his cold voice. “That can’t be right. Lu Ren could have used a flare scroll. He knows better than to die without warning the others. Did you two see anything else?”

The scouts shook their heads; they were too scared to talk.

“Exactly, someone is trying to mess with our mission.” The chubby elder murmured to himself. He then rose his voice and ordered to the scouts, “send a message to the family. I want someone to check on Lu Ren’s spirit flame. I need to know who is responsible for this as soon as possible! Assemble a team to search for Lu Ren. I want him in front of me in a day! Dead or alive!”

“Sir, how about the search? Should we keep looking for the Drakehead before finding out who is behind this?” One of the scouts gathered his courage and spoke up.

“Keep running the search!? Brother, do you mind overwatching the base alone while I lead the search team into North Hill Bay myself!” The chubby elder narrowed his eyes. He replied to the scout slowly but aggressively, “the council said they are pretty certain that the Drakehead is close to the bay area. Now, this incidence might be the proof of their assumption.”

“Be careful, it could have been an inside job.” Said the thinner elder. He then nodded and thought, ‘I have to lock this city down. There will be chaos if the other big families find out about the Drakehead!’

Since Ye Wei returned to the Drakehead, he had been cultivating deep down in the pond in its freezing water. Like all condensed prime Warriors, he was able to stay in water for an extensive period of time. He cultivated non-stop for five days; he refreshed for a lungful of air every few hours.

Now that he was able to use his will-force and the Qi in his meridians being condensed by the cold water, he could speed up the Falling Star form even more. His body efficiently absorbed and purified the energy that came from the bottom of the pond.

Within five days of intensive training Ye Wei's cultivation level quickly escalated. He was close to a five-star condensed prime level. After the breakthrough, he would be able to have the body strength of a peak ten-star condensed prime Warrior under the effect of his Supernova stance second evolution.

'When I breakthrough, I should be able to fight two ten-star condensed prime Warrior at the same time!'

"Slosh!"

A pillar of water broke through the surface. Ye Wei shortly followed.

"It shouldn't be long now before I am a five-star condensed prime Warrior, but how should I do it?" Ye Wei stood by the pond, muttering to himself. His body had been filled with Qi for days, but he could not find an opportunity to advance.

He decided to take his mind off cultivating and study the Zodiac Sword stance instead. Ye Wei pointed his fingers at the pond, thirty six Qi swords nimbly flew across the pond's calm surface akin to a group of dragonflies.

"These Qi swords are looking better and better!" Ye Wei proudly exclaimed. His tightened face smiled while looking at the ripples.

'These Qi swords' movements are unpredictable. I can easily catch a ten-star condensed prime Warrior off guard if I find the right timing to use them.' Ye Wei closed his eyes to simulate a fight.

'The Selenic Sword is still more powerful. However, if I have to fight a

group of enemies, the Qi swords would be more effective.' He waved his arms around, ordering the Qi swords to accelerate and curve; in his imagination, he shredded his i opponents into pieces.

Chapter 172: Five

“What’s the situation?” Ye Wei spoke using Runic badge. Ye Wei and Lu Feng had not seen each other for a few days, but they kept updating each other.

The badge in Ye Wei’s hand gently vibrated. Lu Feng’s voice sounded in his head. “I am safe here at the Lu’s, but one of the returned prime level elders is missing, and reliable sources informed me that they are sending eight ten-star condensed prime Warriors from the headquarters to Green Moon City for reinforcement.”

Lu Feng’s voice conveyed his anxiousness, “I assume they will be going straight to North Hill Bay.”

“Eight of them...” Ye Wei grumbled and frowned. He was tightly clenching onto the Runic Badge. ‘I can deal with one but eight of them!? I don’t think I am prepared for that.’

“A returned prime Warrior is missing?” Ye Wei felt slightly concerned. His mind was clouded by the potential threats. ‘I have to breakthrough before any of them enter the North Hill Bay area; or else, I’m afraid their arrival will be the end of our mission.’

Ye Wei paused and continued, “how about the Du’s? How did they react after learning about their people’s deaths?”

Lu Feng heard a noise close to him. After moving to a quieter spot, he replied. “The Du’s? Pfft, I will deal with the Du’s. Don’t worry about that for now. They didn’t link it to the Ye’s; your family is fine!”

His gaze became cold. ‘Since three years ago, the Du family knew more than they should have. I guess I have to take them out altogether just to be safe.’

After briefly bidding their farewells, Ye Wei put his badge back into his inside pocket and continued practising the Peerless Sword Qi. When dawn arose and dyed the sky orange again, Ye Wei jumped into the water to cultivate again.

‘Time is of the essence!’ Ye Wei thought to himself. He was feeling insecure. He wondered whether the Lu’s would send their elites to North Hill Bay, and he suspected the returned prime Warrior was also on his way.

While Ye Wei was cultivating; he trying his best to breakthrough. The news of Lu Ren being missing, and the Du’s death spread quickly in Green Moon City.

Of course, the citizens all believed it was the result of a wild beast attack. They all surmised a pact of powerful, vicious rare beasts were involved. The wild beasts’ attack logically explained the state of the Du’s when they were found and the disappearance of Lu Ren. All the martial family squads sent to search North Hill Bay felt nervous and demoralized. They were too scared to even enter the woods. Every time they heard the howling wind, they flinched thinking a beast would come and attack them.

After a few days of regrouping and planning, the Lu’s interrupted the awkward atmosphere lingering in Green Moon City. Their reinforcement, eight ten-star condensed prime Warriors, were immediately deployed to the North Hill Bay area by the Lu’s elder based in the City Lord’s castle. The Lu’s reinstatement of authority restored the locals’ confidence.

Now that the Lu’s had over thirty condensed prime Warriors, in total, patrolling the North Hill Bay area including the local martial families’ cultivators, the Lu’s could actually manage a high-grade rare beast attack.

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more helpless. 'I don't see how Ye Wei can deal with all of them.'

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"I cannot just give up like this!" He bit his lips. "Dad might be able to buy me more time!"

Since Lu Feng began cultivating by the pond, he saw the Drakehead area as his own hideout and became attached. He knew better than to let his emotion takeover, however. He began to look for other ways out. He was ready to put his pride down for a greater cause. 'Eight more ten-star condensed prime Warriors, the Lu's are using all the stronger cultivators in the region! Who can I count on now?'

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"Ye Wei, the Lu's men are here, We don't have more than half a month. They will find the Drakehead in three weeks time at most if we don't do something now to slow them down. I can confirm they have sent eight extra ten-star condensed prime Warriors to North Hill Bay!" Lu Feng held his Runic Badge and spoke urgently. "With this many powerful cultivators, they will be able to secure the Drakehead. We will have no way to regain control of the pond once they found it and figured out what it is!"

"Also, in a month's time the sandalwood box is going to stop working. When Lu Ren's jade token reconnects with his spirit candle flame, the Lu's will know about his death and North Hill Bay will be swarmed with their force."

'Half a month. I have to be prepared in half a month. I have the iron talisman fully charged, but I need more than that to fight that many!' Ye

Wei thought of the vermilion runes, thought about the Glacial Temple, but soon realized he did not have enough time to seek solutions from these directions while he had to improve his cultivation as quickly as possible.

‘Cultivating here means I am absorbing and processing primal energy twenty times than usual, but that is not enough.’ Ye Wei looked down into the darkness as he thought to himself.

It was clear to him since he investigated the pond that the deeper he was, the quicker his body absorbs the surrounding energy. He also worked out that forty-five feet was his body’s limit without Supernova stance.

‘The runes are ready.’ Ye Wei ground his teeth, and activated the amplification stance, to endure pain and cultivate in the blistering cold was the most efficient way to become stronger.

“Bang”

The rumbling burst of Qi was muffled by the water pressure, Ye Wei swam downwards, carried by the water current his stance created.

Sixty feet.

Ninety feet.

Hundred and twenty feet.

‘This is the limit!’ The cold and the pressure stung every inch of Ye Wei’s skin, his lips were turning purple and his body began to shiver.

‘The Supernova stance will only last half an hour, I will have to think of a way to make the best out of it.’ Ye Wei closed his eyes, used the Falling Star form in the dark and quiet.

Ye Wei was trying to push his cultivation speed, surprised to know how much quicker he was it was now for him to fill up his meridian space. ‘Thirty-three times quicker!’

‘Ten days, with this speed I will definitely breakthrough!’ Ye Wei’s eyes shone a determined glint. ‘If I become a five-star Warrior my, the Peerless

Qi Sword should work effectively even if I have to fight eight ten-star condensed prime Warriors on my own, given that I use the stance under the second evolution's effect.

Excited by the possibilities, Ye Wei began to train non-stop with a new interval, half an hour at hundred and twenty feet under, two hours at forty-five feet and finally half an hour of resting and consolidating his cultivation on land.

On the seventh day of training, Ye Wei could feel the significance of his intense routine, he felt the Qi in his body did not only get denser, but also warmer.

His Qi eventually burst out. Span around his body, creating a vigorous whirlpool in the otherwise calm body of water.

“Bang!”

Ye Wei could feel his Sentient expanding, the excruciating pain was twisting his face. The Mystic Mount presence shone bright, helped processing the energy surges Ye Wei overloaded himself with.

Three days before schedule, Ye Wei had broke through with the extra compression he pushed upon himself.

The Progenitor had be watching all along, thought that he had to let the clan know about the threat somehow, as one of the best human cultivators he had encountered in terms of cultivating speed.

‘Five-star condensed prime level!’ The exhaustion on Ye Wei’s face vanished, replaced by an air of curiosity. ‘Now I can see how deep this pond goes!’ His eyes shone bright as he said.

The last time Ye Wei heard from Lu Feng, he was told that the Lu’s were sacrificing speed for thoroughness, and that it would have taken the Lu’s one more week until they reach the pond. Ye Wei was therefore realatively relaxed, knew that he had until the night to consolidate his cultivation. And then he could tell Lu Feng the good news, plan how they should work to slow the Lu’s.

‘I just broke though, there is nothing much I can do on the cultivation

end that will make a more powerful fighter, I should be at peak ten-star condensed prime level when I use Supernova stance.’ Ye Wei thought to himself, calculating. ‘However the second evolution is not going to do a lot now.’

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Condensed prime Warriors’ Qi, silvery ball in their dantian and their life energy will transform once they breakthrough to become a returned prime Warrior.

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Pu Yuan had once told Ye Wei that he it will take more than ten years for him to learn the third Supernova stance evolution. However, when Ye Wei’s body went through great pressure when he was struck by a demon king, during which the eighty percent of the runes on his bones were transformed.

Ye Wei revisited his memories, of how strong Commander Shi and Ning City’s Lord Chen were. ‘I will study the Supernova stance now, that is the only way, to possess the power a returned prime Warrior! Even just for thirty minutes!’

Chapter 172 - Five

“What’s the situation?” Ye Wei spoke using Runic badge. Ye Wei and Lu Feng had not seen each other for a few days, but they kept updating each other.

The badge in Ye Wei’s hand gently vibrated. Lu Feng’s voice sounded in

his head. "I am safe here at the Lu's, but one of the returned prime level elders is missing, and reliable sources informed me that they are sending eight ten-star condensed prime Warriors from the headquarters to Green Moon City for reinforcement."

Lu Feng's voice conveyed his anxiousness, "I assume they will be going straight to North Hill Bay."

"Eight of them..." Ye Wei grumbled and frowned. He was tightly clenching onto the Runic Badge. 'I can deal with one but eight of them!? I don't think I am prepared for that.'

"A returned prime Warrior is missing?" Ye Wei felt slightly concerned. His mind was clouded by the potential threats. 'I have to breakthrough before any of them enter the North Hill Bay area; or else, I'm afraid their arrival will be the end of our mission.'

Ye Wei paused and continued, "how about the Du's? How did they react after learning about their people's deaths?"

Lu Feng heard a noise close to him. After moving to a quieter spot, he replied. "The Du's? Pfft, I will deal with the Du's. Don't worry about that for now. They didn't link it to the Ye's; your family is fine!"

His gaze became cold. 'Since three years ago, the Du family knew more than they should have. I guess I have to take them out altogether just to be safe.'

After briefly bidding their farewells, Ye Wei put his badge back into his inside pocket and continued practising the Peerless Sword Qi. When dawn arose and dyed the sky orange again, Ye Wei jumped into the water to cultivate again.

'Time is of the essence!' Ye Wei thought to himself. He was feeling insecure. He wondered whether the Lu's would send their elites to North Hill Bay, and he suspected the returned prime Warrior was also on his way.

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Chapter 173: Supreme Palace

‘The deeper I dive into the pond, the stronger the pressure will be, together will the freezing cold, I should be able to compress my Qi enough. Then I will use the Falling Star form at full speed to heat up my body, my meridians should be able to expand that way! I’m just going to try it!’ Ye Wei’s eyes shone a glimmer of determination, he activated the runes on his bones, his Qi amplified, strengthened his body to ten-star condensed prime level.

Ten-star Runemaster, Master Yi, South Star Academy’s principal Gu Qing and the City Lord were the strongest cultivators in Green Moon City, all three of them were peak ten-star condensed prime Warriors.

Now Ye Wei could consistently use the Supernova stance second evolution, he had joined the three in terms of combat power, there were only a handful of cultivators below return prime level that could threaten him.

‘I really need a hot bath after this!’ Ye Wei thought to himself as he dove in.

With the aid of Spindrift Steps, Ye Wei focused on shielding his body, navigated the deeper parts of the pond with relative ease.

‘Hundred and twenty feet!’

‘Hundred and thirty feet!’

‘Two hundred and fifty feet!’

‘Am I finally at the bottom?’ The freezing temperature caused Ye Wei’s muscles to spasm, he ground his teeth and sped up his Qi flow. So his body does not stiffen up. The water current Ye Wei’s Qi flow created stirred up the sand and mud at the pond’s bed.

‘This pressure is vast, but it’s still nothing comparing to the demon king’s grip, I need more pressure on my body, this will not compress the runes on my bones enough to transform them.’ Ye Wei’s thought, his feet were touching the soft, muddy pond bed.

‘Eh? What is that?’ A faint blue light caught his attention. Surrounded in darkness, a spark of hope lit up in Ye Wei’s mind.

After a few propelling strokes, Ye Wei was only an arm’s length away from the luminant blue pebbles that lit up the dark depth.

‘So this is the real Drakehead!?’ Ye Wei frowned, examined the bright pebbles that covered pond bed, the freezing cold and the crushing water pressure felt less agonizing now his focus had been shifted.

‘I should try cultivating right here!’ Ye Wei sat himself on the bottom of the pond, the vast energy in his body weighed him down, he couldn’t tell if he was shivering from the cold or the excitement.

‘I am cultivating nearly forty times quicker than usual, just one day of cultivating here makes up for more than a month of training anywhere else!’

‘If I can stay here all the time I can even become a returned prime Warrior in merely a week.’ Ye Wei shook his head and thought, ‘only if the Supernova stance’s effect could last longer...’

‘Could this be the scared mark?’

Ye Wei swam around to investigate but nothing really stood out.

‘But I can’t get any deeper, where is the Dreakhead if this isn’t it!?’ Ye Wei thought to himself, confused.

‘Eh?’ While feeling frustrated, Ye Wei felt a turbulence of chilling water crashing onto his back.

He looked behind, to the left, realized the current came from a two meters wide crack at the corner of the pond

‘There is a tunnel!’ Ye Wei’s eyes brightened up, eager to find out what what was at the other end.

‘I have to hurry!’ Ye Wei grit his teeth, ignore the cold and swam slithered into the confined space like an eel.

The pressure increased and the temperature dropped even lower as he reached further into the tunnel. The runes on his bones were wiggling,

shining gold and the remaining tadpole shaped patterns were turning into yin yang shapes.

‘This is it! I can come down here to evolve the Supernova runes after I’ve rested!’ Ye Wei thought to himself as he felt the vibration from the transforming energy on his bones.

‘What is that?’ Ye Wei had reached the end of the tunnel, he could see a chamber in front of him, made visible by the same shade of blue glow as the pebbles on pond’s bottom.

But instead of pebbles, he could see a ten feet tall, thirty feet wide small palace. The bricks and stones were covered by algae and mud, dimmed out the ghostly blue glow.

‘This building is draining the heat, I can feel it!’

Ye Wei shivered, his veins were becoming purple, his muscles tightened up, his jaw was shaking, a knocking sound went through his skull.

‘I can’t get closer!’ Ye Wei wanted to evolve his Supernova stance but he knew better than to damage his body irreversibly by the freezing cold.

The nine hundred feet between him and the building structure was so close but yet so far.

‘I need to know what I am looking at!’ Ye Wei was determined though in agony, he waved his palm, sent forth a dense Qi strike.

“Bang!”

A compressed water current flowed quickly from Ye Wei’s hand to the palace, ridding the vegetation and dirt off the blue structure.

“Rumble!”

The burst of water revealed the blue runic engravings, the temple resembled a runicle, only larger and the rune sequences were more complex.

‘Supreme Yu Palace! The name Ye Yu does ring a bell!’ Ye Wei read the letters on the entrance and thought to himself, ‘this is the Drakehead, there is no mistaking!’

Ye Wei was eager to explore but he could not deal with the cold, he could only look at the palace from distance. ‘

‘Supernova stance’s effect is fading, it’s a shame I can’t train here any longer...’ He knew he would have to rest before he could dive down again. Ye Wei gave the palace a last glance before finding his way back out and up.

“Slosh!”

Ye Wei broke through the pond’s surface, the splash of water refracted the setting sun, projected a colour spectrum onto his cheek/

Ye Wei’s runic badge was twinkling, notifying him about Lu Feng’s message.

‘Wei, I can’t doing anything now, they have developed a method to track energy disturbance, it will not be long before they figure out the Drakehead's location.

Ye Wei frowned after he processed Lu Feng’s words, ‘we have to act now, before they tell their superiors, otherwise we won’t have a way to protect the spot when they send even more reinforcement.’

“Lu Feng, I need you to come to the pond now, so that we can make a move tonight!” Ye Wei sent the message through his badge.

“Are you sure about this? We will have to deal with eight ten-star condensed prime Warriors and some weaker cultivators also at condensed prime level! Ye Wei, this is a serious matter, and there will be no going back if we decide to fight them. Since they have not found the place yet, shouldn’t we wait a little longer? We are still not strong enough.” Lu Feng’s voice was shaking, he was nervous and it could be heard even through the badge.

Lu Feng shook his head on the other side. ‘I’ve told him that all eight of them are stronger than Lu Ren, why is he acting so stubborn?’

“You have defeated Lu Ren swiftly but that drained everything out of you, that was a week ago, have you even recovered yet?”

“No more waiting, we will do it tonight! I told you, it had been all or nothing ever since we decided to kill Lu Ren and the Du’s.” Ye Wei’s determined voice came through the badge again, ‘I have not been training so I could watch while they raid my family’s sacred place. With my Qi at peak ten-star condensed prime level, I can fight many at once or even win if we manage to set up an ambush.’

“Okay then, if you say so! I will be on my way!” Lu Feng put away the runic badge and rushed towards the pond.

Although the duo had made a heavenly oath and decided to work as a team, the leading role had been shifting towards Ye Wei without either of them noticing.

Lu Feng arrived at the pond to see Ye Wei calmly sitting on the grass, resting, after a brief moment he broke the silence.

“Ye Wei so what is the plan?” Lu Feng could not wipe the concern off his face although his partner seemed at peace. “Or do you have a plan at all?! You might lose your life!”

“Calm down, I am not stupid, I will not risk our lives,” Ye Wei patted Lu Feng’s shoulder, smiled and said: “We will attack from the dark, they will not even know who we are if we execute my plan correctly.”

Chapter 174: Ambush

"Okay," Lu Feng grunted and asked, "what do you need me to do? I just want to clarify that I am not willing to die for this. I know I am not strong enough to help." He was sure he would just become a burden in combat with the Lu's powerful reinforcement.

"We are an alliance. I know I should be encouraging you right now, but I think your decision to fight them is questionable." He continued, "well, frankly, I would say recklessness even."

"I do not expect you to help fight them off; that part is fine. However, I will need you to keep a lookout for me. If you see any danger from a distance while I am attacking, I need you to send me a message on the badge," Ye Wei spoke each word clearly. "Of course, you can fight them if you feel confident; but it needs to be done as cleanly as possible. Whether it be an escape or an ambush, we cannot let them know who we are!"

"I will just kill as many as possible, make them panic, use the element of surprise, and deter them from communicating with one another."

Ye Wei paused for a while. He watched the ripples spread on the pond's surface as the breeze swept across. "What about Lu Ren, have you heard anything from the returned prime level elders?" Lu Feng frowned, "actually, this could be a trap. Maybe they want to lure the people responsible for his disappearance with the reinforcement?"

"That's not possible; they are suspecting something yes. However, as long as they cannot confirm Lu Ren's death, they have better things to worry about. You have to remember they are managing the Lu's all around the area," Lu Feng snorted and chuckled, "we have another week before the sandalwood box's effect wears off."

Lu Feng placed his hand onto his chest to check the box was still in his possession. "After his spirit flame dies down, we will have a few days before the news reaches Green Moon City. Only then should we worry about the two elders."

"If they do find out about Lu Ren's death, do you think they will

interfere?” Ye Wei paused slightly and then asked.

“The two returned prime level elders only care about the Drakehead. They will probably see Lu Ren’s death as a necessary sacrifice to get to the Drakehead.” Lu Feng tried his best to summarize and retell what he saw and heard “When I last met them they were busy shouting at the other Lu’s, making sure they would keep the secret.”

‘As long as the returned prime Warriors are not there to help, I should be able to make an impact one way or another.’ thought Ye Wei. His eyes brightened up. “However, the returned prime elders will come when I kill more of their ten-star condensed prime Warriors.”

‘So he is serious about it!? Are we going to have to fight the elders?’ Lu Feng’s face turned ashen. He did not think that far.

Lu Feng’s concern was written all over his face, realizing his partner’s intentions. They both became silent.

‘He didn’t want my help. He summoned me here to talk about how we should clean up after he ambushed the Lu’s forces on his own!’

The Lu’s condensed prime Warrior reinforcements were now close to the Drakehead. If left alive, they would be at the Drakehead in merely ten days; if killed, the the elders stationed at Green Moon City might intervene.

Ye Wei and Lu Feng’s operation was in a dilemma.

“I have one way to mess with the Lu’s. We would be announce the Drakehead’s location, and let the other martial families fight for it.” Lu Feng proposed. His lips became pale, and his frown grew deeper. “We will crush the Lu’s at their weakest!”

“I will not allow that! I swear; it will do us no good! I am not going to risk losing control over the Drakehead. It’s my family’s land, my ancestor’s treasure!” Ye Wei’s gaze intensified. “Green Moon City would become a mess. Would you like to see your home become a war zone?”

“Pfft! Do you think your plan is better than mine?” Lu Feng grunted. He was more interested in revenge than anything else, to sabotage than to be

constructive.

“Any plan is better than your plan!” Ye Wei stared at Lu Feng. He was surprised by how someone could be so affected by rage and revenge even to this extent. “We are only alive because we are in control of this place. If they took over, we won’t stand a chance to fight them by force.”

“As I suggested: I will assassinate as much of them as I can, I will then buy us time and we shall improvise from there. Be patient Lu Feng!” Ye Wei replied. He believed the underwater palace held the key to him evolving his Supernova stance.

When Ye Wei managed to evolve the Supernova stance, he would have the power to fight a returned prime Warrior. Once he then acquired gadgets and tricks from the Runemaster Union and the Glacial Temple, he would even be able to stand his ground while fighting against the best cultivators in the Lu family regardless of age.

Ye Wei realized there were more important matters to focus on. Thus he decided not to tell Lu Feng about the underwater palace he discovered.

“I guess that is for the best.” Lu Feng reluctantly admitted. He realized Ye Wei’s decision was more sensible one. He decided to trust his calm and collected partner, to protect their secret.

The sun set in the west sea, and darkness descended. Thick clouds covered the silvery moon, and Ye Wei stood up, freshened by the cool evening breeze.

“Let’s move!” After covering his face with a black disguise. His ghostly figure departed, he headed straight towards where the Lu’s men set camp.

“I hope it will all go according to plan!” Lu Feng ground his teeth and followed. He kept a distance, trying to remember all the little things he was told to do.

Silence pervaded the woods. The only noise that could be heard was the dried leaves dancing in the dusk’s breeze. The duo went past a few beast nests in the windy night. They eventually arrived at a flat site filled with

tents.

The Lu's base looked intimidating lit by the wiggling fire.

The fact that the Lu's reinforcement set up campfires either meant they were amateurs, or they were not afraid of the beasts and other cultivators knowing their location. All of them who stayed up guarding the camps had incredible Qi presence. Both Ye Wei and Lu Feng could feel the guards were at least condensed prime Warriors.

Ye Wei was standing on a bushy tree branch, surveilled the men dressed in white robes from afar. He could tell they were his target from the golden family crest on embroidered in front of their chests.

He could tell from the Qi disturbance that all three of them were condensed prime Warriors, and their leaders were resting within the camps.

The infiltration was done slowly and cautiously. Ye Wei had to wait for the perfect moment to strike. He wanted to make sure these condensed prime guards took their last breath before they could send their superiors a distress signal.

The gusts of winds grew stronger as the night got darker; the clouds dispersed, and the moonlight showered onto the woods. The wild beasts were becoming more active, but they avoided tents as they could smell and feel danger where the campfires were.

Next to the swishing trees, the three guards jealously looked at a shaking tent.

"These Du women are extremely energetic! Lu Li is going to be drained after this!" One of them licked his lips, commentating vulgarly.

"You can't blame him. He is still young, so he can't really say no to this kind of temptation. It's good for him that he gets a night off, hahaha!"

"Good for him? Maybe, but how are any of us going to sleep if they are going to be this noisy the whole evening?"

"Ah, it's nice to be young!" All three of them took a sip of wine and

laughed while they excitedly talked about women.

As they were all keeping quiet, distracted by what was happening inside the tent, Ye Wei rushed out of the side bush, three Qi Swords flew out as he approached the trio.

“Plop! Plop! Plop!”

The Peerless Swords instantly slit all three condensed Warriors’ throats; their white robes were dyed a deep, yet fresh red.

Their consciousness faded before they knew what took their lives, and their eyes became dull and dim. Ye Wei quickly channeled his Qi to hold them before they hit the ground. Their bodies softened, and he gently placed the dead on ground. He made them look as if they were falling asleep.

The campfire continued to flicker in the night breeze.

Having been through numerous life-threatening battles, Ye Wei was less and less emotional than he once was. The compassion in him had turned to a compromised heartlessness.

‘These guys guarded him while he is doing that !? He has got to be someone important in the Lu family.’ Ye Wei speculated.

‘He must have trained nonstop at the Drakehead,’ Lu Feng stated. He was shocked to see Ye Wei’s decisive and lethal moves, ‘and what stance was that? It took him less than a second to put them to sleep.’

‘This monster, I can’t believe he got this much stronger just in a few days!’ Lu Feng tried to compare Ye Wei with the other young cultivators, but he couldn’t think of anyone comparable.

‘Even the strongest youngster of this generation of the Lu’s, Lu Fan, would be no match for Ye Wei.’ Lu Feng had always looked up to his young cousin and used him as a reference point to know what he could improve on in terms of cultivation. “I had been blind. I should have realized I only saw a small fraction of Ye Wei’s talent when I was in Ning City.”

Ye Wei silently sneaked closer to the tent i after he gently laid the dead bodies next to the campfire.

‘How can he not notice I am here?’ Ye Wei chuckled as he heard the man’s pant and the woman’s moan. ‘This man is a ten-star condensed prime Warrior but a sloppy cultivator. I guess that’s what it’s like to be born into a big family. You get all the pills you need and your senses become blunt.’

Ten minutes past. The man in the tent groaned and breathed deep and slow.

‘This is it. He is not alert at all!’ Ye Wei reached for a scroll from his sleeve and tore it to deploy a runic array. The sound of the man and the woman in the tent suddenly became silent.

At the same time as Ye Wei tore the scroll, his Qi sword struck towards Lu Li’s neck.

Lu Li was startled, his pleasure evaporated, and was replaced by a sharp sense of pain.

Chapter 175: Brutal

Although Lu Li was not the most alert cultivator, he was a powerful fighter. His ten-star condensed prime level body strength saved him. His tough skin and muscles allowed him enough time to defend himself. Identifying the source of the pain, he bent his body backwards to avoid decapitation.

"Who is it that dares to assault me!?" He grabbed his bag next to him and took out a scroll.

"Zoom!"

He tore the scroll without hesitation. A golden Qi armor appeared on top of his whole body. The scroll lost its green glow as the stance was activated. 'High-level Myst stance, Golden Light Chainmail!'

"Clang! Clang! Clang!"

Ye Wei did not wait nor did he stop. As Lu Li was injecting his Qi into the armor to strengthen it, Ye Wei kept striking. The Qi Swords mercilessly rained onto Lu Li's armor, denting and chipping it.

"Crack!"

The dents became fissures and the Golden Light Chainmail stance disintegrated. Ye Wei's strikes then landed on Lu Li's left shoulder. He was bleeding out like a fountain while the residue energy from the swords and the armor hit the half naked woman striking her unconscious.

Ye Wei frowned. He quickly approached his mark. 'He reacted so quickly. Have I underestimated him!?'

"Who are you!? And how dare you make me bleed? I am a Lu elder's grandson!" Lu Li panicked. He screamed as he took another scroll out from his bag.

He never thought he would be ambushed with so many guards protecting his camp. If the Qi swords were just a split second quicker, they would have pierced through his neck.

Lu Li held tight onto the two scrolls. He took a step back and channeled his Qi to strengthen his body, “Who are you!?” He stared at his assassin who was dressed in a black disguise. All the while, Lu Li looked for a way to escape. He knew a sound barrier had been made around the tent. Thus, he shouts for help would not be heard; therefore, he desperately strove to escape.

“So you are the direct successor of the Lu’s bloodline?!” said Ye Wei coldly, looking calmly at the topless young man.

“What do you want? If you keep me alive, I will reward you! I will even tell you a secret, do you know what a Drakehead is?” Lu Li trode backwards as Ye Wei approached. His hands were shaking, but his grip was tight. He was ready to tear the scroll if Ye Wei got any closer.

“What about a Drakehead?” Ye Wei was startled but immediately realized he just heard a bluff, ‘if he knows where the Drakehead is, then the Lu’s wouldn’t be here!’

A second was all Lu Li needed. He smiled mischievously as he tore the scroll in his hand.

“Hmpft!” Ye Wei grunted and sent forth his Qi swords. His reflexes were superior to Lu Li’s. His Qi sword nicked Lu Li’s fingers and penetrated his palm.

“You sneaky man!” Ye Wei grunted and created five more Qi swords on each of fingers. With a palm strike, he directed the sharp spectral blades towards Lu Li’s chest.

Lu Li flinched and dropped the mystic scrolls on the floor. Nevertheless, he managed to inject Qi into a dark green ring he was wearing. Numerous layers of green energy shield appeared between him and Ye Wei.

“Boom!”

Ye Wei’s powerful strike toppled the tent but failed to penetrate the defensive forbidden Myst stance.

‘Cyan Lightshield! Lu Li has mystic arms!’ Ye Wei felt sloppy that he didn’t notice the green glow on his mark’s finger.

“Naive, do you really think that can save you?” The green shield began to crack under Ye Wei’s continuous strikes.

Lu Li chuckled. He broke the tent and the runic sound barrier while Ye Wei was busy dealing with the green shield.

“Kid, nobody can save you now! You will learn what a mistake it is to mess with a Lu!”

The campsite suddenly became chaotic.

“What is happening here!?”

“Intruder! We have an intruder!” The cultivators woke up to the sound of explosion.

‘Damn it. This is exactly what I didn’t want to happen.’ Ye Wei grumbled, finally shattering the green shield with the Peerless Sword Qi.

Lu Li roared. His muscles bulged up, and his skin gained a metallic glow. “Good luck escaping!” His bestial eyes were set right on Ye Wei’s dark figure. With a heavy step, he lunged forward.

‘Body stance!?’ Ye Wei narrowed his eyes, and his lips curled into a cruel smile. “Well I didn’t come here to mess with the Lu’s, I came here to kill them.”

“Bang!”

Five Qi swords cut through air and landed on Lu Li’s bare chest with a whirling Qi trail.

Lu Li’s bloodthirsty smile froze at the sound of impact. He quickly slid backwards as if he was hit by a sledgehammer. Two long trails appeared on the ground under his feet, but not a single mark was left on his body.

“Cough!” Lu Li placed his hand on his chest; his body twitched in agony.

“Master Lu, are you okay?” A group of condensed prime Warriors landed around Lu Li. Seven of them were at ten-star level. After checking their leader, they all put their eyes on Ye Wei.

“I am fine, but this kid has a trick or two up his sleeves. Be careful and

don't let him get away! I want him captured and tortured!" Lu Li said ferociously as he deactivated his body strengthening stance. His wounds began to bleed quickly as he relaxed his body. Therefore, he took an injury controlling pill.

The seven ten-star condensed prime cultivators surrounded Ye Wei in no time. While the Warriors from Green Moon City's martial families stood further behind. The locals were just there as a formality; none of them really wanted to risk themselves for the Lu's.

"Whoever captures this kid will be rewarded with ten Myst scrolls and a three star mystic arm!" Lu Li scream loud enough for the whole camp to hear.

'The Warriors standing at the back can be ignored. Not only are they weak, I can sense that they don't even plan to fight!' Ye Wei's eyes scanned across, 'these seven though, are willing to fight me!' he quickly made a long sequence of hand seals based off his decisive assessment. Numerous rune sequences bursted out and turned into eight Qi swords, flying straight to the enemy's frontline.

"Careful!" Lu Li's pupils dilated, haunted by his recent experience of Ye Wei's technique. However it was too late. Although every one of the seven heard him, they had no idea how careful they should be.

"You should have listened to your leader." Ye Wei said callously.

The condensed prime Warriors' attacks surrounded Ye Wei from all directions. All of them used the same formula to strengthen their bodies; thus, the cultivators became small storms of energy.

"Swoosh! Swoosh!" Ye Wei identified the threat. He guided his Qi swords to the two cultivators at the front.

Both of them heard a popping sound and felt a hold in the layers of Qi spinning around their bodies.

"How can it be so sharp?" The two ten-star condensed prime Warriors' faces turned pale, regretting their decisions to be in front.

Even though Ye Wei's Peerless Swords was still not a mature stance, the

fact that the technique was the foundation of a rare sky stance meant the Qi swords were as strange to the Lu's men as they were powerful.

The Qi swords raged towards their target in less time it took an advanced cultivator to react. The two vanguards standing in the front could only watch and wait for their to end to come.

“Swoosh!” Ye Wei's finger swiftly swiped to the left.

The Qi sword flew towards one of the two. It penetrated his chest and immediately burrowed through his heart, sending him backwards.

‘Root Prison.’ Ye We clenched his fist and rooted the other guard on the spot

This Lu was a little quicker to react, but not entirely. Lifting his arm up in hopes that it would save him, it was only to be cleanly sliced off.

The other five ten-star condensed prime Warriors cursed and shivered; each one of them was startled by the casualties.

“Damn it! I warned them! Useless rubbish!” Lu Li frustratedly shouted. He realized he would have to fight Ye Wei on his own. He took another pill to enhance his body and Qi and braced himself for this fatal fight.

Chapter 176: Escape

After neutralizing the two vanguards, Ye Wei did not stop his attack. His hands danced in the air, creating thirty-six Qi swords. He flung them to the five condensed prime Warriors trying to surround him.

It seemed reckless to Lu Feng that Ye Wei was killing in cold blood, but he soon realized his partner's intention, 'the less people he had to control, the better.'

'High-level Myst stance, Rippling Armor!'

'High-level Myst stance, Gold Body Plate!'

'High-level Myst stance, Lilac Wisteria!'

The remaining five ten-star condensed prime Warriors did not want to leave anything to chance. They quickly lit up the night sky with a sea of bright runes. The sequences turned into defensive stances, and when the shields were activated the cultivators drew more runes that became attacking stances.

"Rumble!"

Ye Wei answered the Lu's wave of stances with his own. His fingers were whizzing and his Qi swords spread wide, crashing into the five ten-star condensed prime Warrior's strikes.

"Who sent this masked man? He is ridiculous!"

"He killed the ten-star condensed prime Warriors while gravely injuring another in a brief exchange. There are no more than three cultivators in Green Moon City who are capable of doing that to my knowledge!" The martial families' cultivators stepped back, leaving the Lu's on their own.

Although they were promised Myst scrolls and a mystic arm, they knew their limits. Ye Wei didn't want to hurt the cultivators from his home town, but he didn't have to do more than what he already was doing. They were all stunned by Ye Wei's display and very reluctant to help the Lu's.

Ye Zhong was in the crowd as the Ye family's representative. He was

just watching on the side, unwilling to risk his life for those Lu tyrants. “The assassin's figure... is a young one, very similar to the age of little Wei, but he is stronger, much stronger!” He pondered to himself. He couldn't help but compare the disguised person with his precious cousin.

Ye Zhong knew Ye Wei was strong. To him, his kid cousin was strong enough to fight even a ten-star condensed prime Warrior, but he was not strong enough to battle like this assassin.

Lu Feng was shocked. He watched everything from a mile away on a top of a tree. ‘When Ye Wei fought Lu Zhong, he struggled. This moment, he was dealing with ten-star condensed prime Warriors at his own pace!’

After a few moments passed, Lu Li absorbed the pill's energy and was nourished by its healing effects. Now in better condition, he glared at Ye Wei with anger.

‘One of them dead, and one of them gravely injured. There are only six ten-star condensed prime Warriors left who can fight including myself. How could he have done so much without getting hurt himself!? I will not be embarrassed like this!’

“Useless idiots! Stop standing there and watch! Kill him!”

“Someone has to die for what he has done here today! I will send him to the torture dungeons, but if he escapes all of you will be sent there instead!” Lu Li's face turned ashen. His veins bulged up, and he growled at the ten-star condensed prime Warriors who were suppose to protect him.

The ten-star condensed prime level cultivators shivered, and their eyes twitched when they heard about the torture dungeons. That's when they knew their master was undoubtedly furious.

They would rather die fighting than to spend a second in the torture dungeons as a victim.

All five of them gained a second wind; they decided to use their best stances, scrolls and mystic arms to get the job done.

Within seconds after Lu Li's threat, a wall of stances swiftly and mercilessly came crashing towards Ye Wei.

All the Green Moon City's cultivators who were spectating became pale and weak on their knees while they felt the trembling earth and blinded by bursts the runic light in the sky.

Under the pressure of this many stances, any condensed prime Warrior, would be reduced to dust, even peak ten-star Warriors would be paralyzed by the immense pressure.

'Starblink Steps!' Intimidated by the different stances rushing towards him, Ye Wei's face darkened and his figure became nimble and unpredictable.

His stance used the force of the his opponents' fierce attacks to create openings at the weaker spots. This allowed him to escape the seemingly undodgeable wall of stances by paths and movements none of the spectators expected to see.

'Selenic Armor!'

'Selenic Levitation!'

Ye Wei's gaze intensified. He was determined not to let his guard down while facing more than ten Myst stance on his own. Some of the ten-star condensed prime Warriors were even using high-level Myst stances.

Although Starblink Steps were powerful, because it was a Spirit stance, it meant that Ye Wei could not just count on it to negate the other powerful Myst stances.

"Humph!" Ye Wei's face tensed, but his eyes were calm and cold. He exhaled slowly. His Selenic Levitation stance altered the gravity within a ten-meter radius around him, thus, slowing the wall of stances collapsing onto him.

'Peerless Swords!' While the incoming stances were held in the air and slowed down, Ye Wei flung thirty-six Qi swords towards his enemies.

"What!?" None of the Lu's expected the assassin would be able to fight back in such a dire situation. They saw the Qi swords coming, but they could not predict the swords' path.

Only two out of five managed to dodge the Qi blades with luck's aid. The rest of the guards' bodies were penetrated by Ye Wei's attack. They died instantaneously and flew backwards.

Ye Wei did not reserve his Qi. He used all of his tricks in hopes that he could take control of the situation.

"I didn't think I would have ever been humiliated like this!" Lu Li's eyes became completely red, with his pulsating hand he took a scroll out of his bag.

"Ttts!"

'You brought this upon yourself. Let's see if you can slither out of this forbidden Myst stance!' Lu Li looked at the scroll in his hand, his eyes twitching. He felt slightly uneasy having to use something costly. 'This was my last forbidden high-level Myst scroll! I can't believe I am forced to use what my grandpa left to me. All those years I have never used and now to use it on a situation like this!'

'Ivy Prison!' Lu Li ground his teeth. Numerous sequences of dark, glowing runes bursted out of the scroll, tearing the scroll and making it dim.

The runes formed eighteen vines of runic ivies. They were thick like a giant python; they grew and flew towards Ye Wei.

The vines caught up with Ye Wei's speed; they chased him down, intertwined and linked together, forming a circular prison around him despite his best efforts to escape.

Just moments later, Ye Wei was caged.

"Kill him!"

Lu Li's bloodthirsty smile grew wider as he saw the assassin being trapped.

"Bang! Bang!"

Lu Li spread his fingers and created a tiny opening on the ivy prison. The Lu's condensed prime Warriors followed their leader's lead and fired

their best stances at Ye Wei.

Alongside the runic ivy, flames, Qi swords, spectral beasts formed in the sky. Tens of stances crushed against Ye Wei simultaneously.

“You’ve killed a lot of our men, and you made me waste two of my forbidden high-level Myst scrolls; however, I really want to get some information from you. Yet, I also want you to die!” Lu Li shouted.

The runic ivy cage was no wider than three meters, and it was the target of over thirty Lu’s Warriors.

Even if Ye Wei grew wings on his back, there was no way he could escape the impending doom.

“It’s a shame the assassin can’t do more. I guess, thought, that is that is good. I don’t want trouble. It will probably draw more Lu’s to the city ultimately.”

“What do you mean? Don’t you want to fight? Don’t you want our city back?” The cultivators from Green Moon City’s martial families began to speculate

Inside the prison, Ye Wei created a spectral selenic beast while still under the effect of starblink steps. He tried both to break and escape the constriction but did not have any luck. He frowned. He focused on trying to break the prison while his selenic armor was still holding together.

‘This is too tough; I just can’t do it.’ Ye Wei could have probably broken the prison if he had more time, but he was under pressure from a number of stances that could soon take his life.

“Ye Wei! The Lu’s returned prime Warrior is coming. Get out of there!” The runic badge vibrated. Lu Feng’s panicking voice sounded in Ye Wei’s head.

‘Why is Lu Qianyin here!?’ Lu Feng recognized the approaching Lu elder, not by the blurred face, but by the speed enhancing stance he was using.

‘Returned prime!?’ Ye Wei gasped, horrified at the state of affairs. He

did not plan to be trapped, and he certainly did not plan to fight a returned prime Warrior in such condition.

‘I need to get out of here!’

Ye Wei flicked his sleeve, and a dark scroll appeared in his palm.

At the price of three hundred thousand, the Instant Shadow Scrolls were not used by many. Upon activation, Ye Wei became a mist and escaped the prison through a vapor form.

“I will be back to kill the rest of you!” Ye Wei taunted as he briefly reappearing. He shot out thirty-six more Qi swords at some of the Lu’s weaker men. The cultivator did not have the power to defend themselves against Ye Wei’s swift strikes.

Ye Wei turned into a thin mist again. He reappeared a few hundred yards from the tents inside the woods. As the scroll’s effect fell off, he used the Starblink Steps again. He melted into North Hill Bay’s dense vegetation.

Chapter 177: North Barren Mountains

“No!” As the Qi swords came closing in, the condensed prime Warriors could only watch. They were not quick enough to react nor were they able to do so due to the mass pressure waves Ye Wei’s attack imposed. There was no time for stances or scrolls, only their demise.

“Bang!”

When despair was the only feeling these condensed prime Warriors felt, seconds before their deaths, tens of golden bolts of Qi caught up with Ye Wei’s swords.

With great precision, the finger-shaped bolts struck each of the thirty-six swords right before the Lu’s men were killed.

The Lu’s looked in awe at the golden fireworks in front of them; their robes and hair were wet from sweating.

Most of them felt numb and stunned since they were about to die.

Lu Li on the other hand, was relieved. If more of his men were to die, he would have to be punished even if his grandfather was an elder. ‘Even if he can’t help, he would be able to the witness to prove how strong this assassin is in front of the council, I don’t think they would believe tonight’s attack otherwise.’

“Chase Him!” Lu Li ordered in a low voice as he leaped forth towards the direction Ye Wei escaped in.

The cultivators from different martial families were hesitant. After giving each other a look, they all decided to follow, but just slow enough so the distance between them and Lu Li kept lengthening.

‘Returned prime Warrior’s strength, he just casually crushed Ye Wei’s strikes from miles away!’ Lu Feng made an even greater effort to hide his Qi presence; there was an undisguised sense of fear and shock in his eyes.

Being a cultivator himself, he knew how impressive the returned prime Warrior’s finger strike was.

A cold glint flashed in Lu Feng's eyes. His figure shook and he disappeared into the shadow projected by moonlight onto the ancient branches.

'You will need more speed if you want to chase me down!' Ye Wei thought to himself as he channeled his Qi and transformed it into runes under his feet. With the Starblink Steps, he became lighter on his feet, pulled ahead of the Lu's chasing him.

Knowing that the returned prime level elder was going to catch up, Ye Wei leaped into the dense bushes and sped up while keeping completely quiet, 'if you want to catch me, you will have to find me first.'

As Ye Wei stood on the land registry, North Hill Bay only covered sixty square miles, but the mountain range that began inside the area stretched a thousand miles northward, giving Ye Wei a labyrinth of trees and rocks for cover.

However, even it was within Ye Wei's plan to utilize the mountain to shake the Lu's. He, like a lot of returned prime Warriors, did not wish to enter too deeply into the North Barren Mountains, which was the home of numerous wild beasts and demon hordes

Four miles away from Ye Wei, a white-robed, chubby older man was accelerating. His fire red hair fluttered in the wind.

His belly wobbled as he sped through the woods. His movements were slow, but his legs were strong, and each of his steps produced a thousand feet distance between them.

Within five breaths' time, the red haired elder, Lu Qianying, had already covered miles. He watched over Lu Li and the rest from above. His presence filled the woods.

His red hair illuminated the dark. It was bright as daylight radiating three hundred feet around him. His Qi presence was affecting people's consciousness on a primal level.

'That is someone special!'

The Lu's and martial family cultivators following were startled. They could not help but admire and worship the old chubby man running above the clouds.

"Elder Qianying!" The Lu's landed and went down on their knees.

"Elder Qianying!" Lu Li quickly stopped and bowed with the utmost respect. Being the head elder's grandson meant that he did not have to get on his knees. Nevertheless, he was not going to waste his time on etiquette when he was busy chasing the assassin.

"I didn't think someone would dare interfere with our search!" Lu Qianying's comedic face darkened. His cold eyes scanned the dense woods below him, trying to spot any abnormalities.

"Any idea who it was?" Lu Qianying's penetrating gaze was set onto Lu Li.

"Sir, I am not sure; he was masked, and a lot stronger than I am. He has some mysterious tricks up his sleeves!" There was no chance that Lu Li would tell the elder he was ambushed when he was in the company of a woman.

"All the ten-star condensed prime Warriors and the locals we recruited fought him at the same time, but it didn't seem to be enough. Out of Green Moon City, I think only the City Lord, Principal Gu and Master Yi are capable of doing what the assassin did. However judging by height, the attacker should be a teenager. Therefore, I assume whoever we are chasing, is not from around the area."

"Not someone from Green Moon City?" Lu Qianying frowned. He wondered if his nightmare had become reality, 'had other families found out about the Drakehead?' The Lu's were powerful in Qing state, but in a grander scale, they were not considered as influential.

The reason why the Lu's sent two returned prime Warriors to Green Moon City was primarily to contain the information about the Drakehead from spreading.

"Stop all other operations! Lock down the North Hill Bay area. Pause the

search before this is settled.” Lu Qianying said with determination, “now, get up and keep chasing you fools!”

The chubby elder narrowed his eyes and glared towards the mountains, ‘this highland is known to be the nest of wild beasts and demons. If this reckless assassin decided to run, it would be towards the bay area, not the mountains!’

Lu Qianying headed in the direction where Ye Wei disappeared into. He spread his will-force and used it as a detection tool, ‘I am too old to play hide and seek, but I will make an exception for you!’

Ye Wei’s Qi was hidden in his bones at rest; therefore, he was able to hide his presence. If he was not a Supernova stance user, his neck would have been snapped by Lu Qianying already.

As the elder ordered, Lu Li and the five ten-star condensed prime Warriors each took seven weaker cultivators with them to search the bay area thoroughly.

If the search teams saw anything, they were ordered to immediately fire their flare scrolls to notify Lu Qianying. The bay area was vast, but for a returned prime Warrior from one end to the other was just fifty steps reach.

Shrouded by darkness, Ye Wei slowed down and covered his tracks entirely. He lifted his head and looked towards the Drakehead that was twenty miles away from where he was, making his choices of escape path very limited.

The Lu’s elder was on his way, and there was not a chance he would let Ye Wei live.

At the hour of dawn, the slumbering trees were woken up by morning breeze. When the gust died down, the bay area returned to silence.

A nimble figure sneaked out of the dense branched. The disturbed birds flapped their wings and flew off.

It was Ye Wei.

‘These people are persistent!’ Ye Wei turned to look behind him, confirming the Lu’s men were still looking for him. They were chasing after him like packs of dogs tailing a fox.

Ye Wei had already took the Lu’s on a tour around the bay area, but he still could not shake them. To make things worse, he could sense the returned prime Warrior was closing in on him.

‘This is the bay area’s edge, if I go any further I will be in the North Barren Mountains.’ Ye Wei looked at the high rise hesitantly and frowned. ‘This is basically an enormous beast nest. There are rare and even emperor grade beasts roaming these mountains.’

“Stop running and I will consider let you die a less painful death!” Lu Qianying’s voice rumbled the woods.

“Swoosh! Swoosh!”

A few Qi bolts flew right at Ye Wei as the loud, threatening words acted as a diversion.

“Fu*k, he knows where I am!?” Ye Wei could hardly hear the wind breaking sound, but he sensed the elder’s strike. He grunted and used the Peerless Swords to defend himself.

“Bang!”

The Qi swords crashed onto the finger-shaped bolts; both stances disintegrated in a burst of light and a shrill sound.

The chubby elder’s will-force picked up Ye Wei’s Qi sword.

“You can’t hide!” Lu Qianying was more or less sure about Ye Wei’s location. His figure turned into a flash towards where the shatters runes were.

“Fatty, follow me into the mountains if you dare!” Ye Wei taunted as he rushed away from the Drakehead.

‘He will be able to catch me in a few seconds if I slow down even though I am a few miles ahead.’ Ye Wei channeled his Qi down to his feet. With

Starblink Steps, his movements were light and nimble; he used the wind and the branches' bounce to speed himself up.

There was no way back, Ye Wei ground his teeth and leaped past the stone tablet that marked the edge of North Hill Bay area.

Chapter 178: Pack

Even though Ye Wei spent all of his energy trying to run from his pursuer, the distance between him and the returned prime Warrior elder was not getting any farther but, on the contrary, closer.

If the situation persisted, it would only be a matter of time when Ye Wei would be caught.

He sensed the returned prime Warrior's killing intent. The terrifying presence kept closing in from behind. Therefore, he took out the only remaining Instant Shadow Scroll he had.

'When the cubby elder will catch up, the only way out will be to use this scroll. I will have to stay in shadow form for as long as I can. I should aim for at least another hundred miles.'

At one point five million contribution tokens each, Instance Shadow Scrolls were considered treasures. Ye Wei was aware of its value, refusing to use it before the last possible moment.

He was confident that the Mystic Mount presence in his Sentient would be able to sense danger. Thus, if the Lu elder ever decided to lead his men into the North Barren Mountains, he could utilize it to lead his pursuers to wild beasts and demons "Damn it, this kid is reckless!" The chubby one-star returned prime Warrior could vaguely feel Ye Wei's energy entering the barren mountains, his face became dark as a starless night.

The North Barren Mountains was the home to a variety of plants and animals; the abundant environment made it the perfect place for dangerous wild beasts to live.

The high grade wild beasts that resided at the mountains made Lu Qianying hesitant about entering. The more self-absorbed one is, the more they treasure their own life. He was not sure if Ye Wei was stupid or brave.

"Elder Qianying, what should we do now?" Lu Li and the other Lu's men all looked at the chubby returned prime Warrior, waiting for the next

order.

All of the chasers lost their enthusiasm and anger as they realized the assassin had entered the North Barren Mountains.

“We will continue to chase him!” Lu Qianying gritted his teeth and said. His gaze became cold as he placed his eyes onto the seemingly endless mountain range.

“Are you sure...?” Lu Li and the rest looked at the towering mountains. They were incapable of imagining a positive outcome if they entered the danger zone.

“What are you cowards so scared of? There are beast nests in these mountains and I am sure that kid knows it too.” Lu Qianying stared at the scared men. He shouted. “Even I will struggle to stay safe deeper in the mountains, do you really think the kid will dare go to where I can’t reach?”

“Nobody can know why we are here. Even I might get into trouble with the council if this doesn’t work out I will be treading on thin ice!” Lu Qianying clenched his fist.

Lu Li and the others stopped complaining and reluctantly followed the superior's orders.

“Get moving! That kid is very good at hiding his Qi presence. I am using a detection stance now, but I think I will not be able to sense him very soon!” Lu Qianying became tense. He had been chasing for the whole evening without any luck. He was no longer underestimating Ye Wei as he struggled to keep up throughout the whole evening.

“Yes!”

Lu Li and the other condensed prime Warriors knew the importance of keeping the operation a secret. They knew keeping it a secret was also one of their top priorities.

“Swoosh! Swoosh!” Motivated by the elder’s words, they channeled their entire strength and followed the chubby figure into the mountains at top speed.

Lead by Lu Qianying's sharp sensing stance, the search team was able to pick up on the weak trace left by Ye Wei, maneuvering in his direction.

'How did they manage to follow me? Are they actually daring to wander into the mountains?' Ye Wei frowned and thought to himself.

Lu Qianying's stance was able to pick up Ye Wei's location, but Ye Wei's soul sensitivity was superior to the Lu elder's detection. He was able to determine the search team's location from a further distance.

Lu Qianying could only vaguely pick up Ye Wei's location while Ye Wei's sensed all the living creatures that were giving off even the smallest life energy.

On the edges of the North Barren Mountain, Ye Wei's figure flashed between trees and rock, looking for paw prints and tracking marks.

Beast nests were a rarer sight on the mountain range's outskirts. Ye Wei had been able to sense a few beasts while he was running, but it would have taken more than a few beasts to strand a returned prime Warrior supported by a large group of condensed prime Warriors.

Ye Wei was looking for a large pack of wild beasts that could potentially occupy or even eliminate his chasers.

'It's harder than I thought it would be. People make the North Barren Mountains sound a lot more dangerous than they really are.' Ye Wei thought to himself while nimbly navigating the range at an extraordinary speed.

'They are half a mile closer!' Ye Wei's brows furrowed, remembered how the chubby elder's finger strikes were strong enough to be life threatening from miles away.

Knowing the elder's extraordinary close range pressured Ye Wei. He, out of sheer nervousness, actually sacrificed a bit of his speed to keep track of the distance between him and the elder's lethal finger strikes.

'There is only around four miles between me and them. I have to find a pack of beasts soon or I will have to run deeper into the mountain range where then I would have to avoid getting surrounded by packs!' Ye Wei

looked towards the high rise and the valleys and lead to the hills. He shook his head, shivering.

‘Where are you when I need you!?’ Ye Wei stomped heavily on a giant rock, propelling him and accelerating his speed.

The corroding rock split in half and cracked into rubble within seconds.

“Ha, desperate kid!” Lu Xianying landed. He looked at the rubble thirty seconds after Ye Wei broke the rock. His cruel smile grew larger.

“Speed up! We are getting closer!” Lu Qianying swiped his arm and ordered his men to run towards where Ye Wei went.

“Swoosh! Swoosh!”

Ye Wei knew his life depends on how quick he ran; while Lu Qianying felt his family’s uprising could be sabotaged by whatever power order the lone assassin to attack the Lu’s camp.

The distance between the two parties kept becoming closer. When the sun had faintly bleached the clouds light pink, the distance between Ye Wei and Lu Qianying shortened to less than two miles. The distance a returned prime Warrior could cover in less than ten seconds.

‘One and a half mile, I am so close my speed enhancing stance could bring me right to you.’ A cold glint appeared in Lu Qianying’s eyes as he chuckled and thought.

“Eh?” Ye Wei could sense the Lu’s closing in. The hair on his back stood up as he felt threatened by the returned prime Warrior’s fearsome presence.

Ye Wei would much rather head deeper into the mountains than confront the Lu elder.

Another hour passed, the sun was entirely above the skyline. It lit up the long and winding mountain ridge.

Sunlight flashed through the branches of the trees. Ye Wei was camouflaged by the variegated shadows. He just crossed over a valley, entering the highland and the dense woods.

“A wild beast pack!” As Ye Wei entered the dense forest, his Sentient shook. He smiled as he picked up their fierce presence.

‘Hahaha, finally!’ Ye Wei thought to himself, ‘enjoy your meal!’ The mystic mount presence sensed the exact location of the wild blood wolves. He was ready to lead the Lu’s right into the beasts’ jaws.

“Three high-grade general bloodwolves, twelve mid-grade, forty low-grade.” Ye Wei mumbled to himself as he counted. His enchanted will-force diffused from him and filled the valley. This gave him a detailed mind image of the location and even the thick hair of the beasts.

“Kid, today’s date will be on your headstone!” Lu Qianying growled. He was now exactly one and a half miles away from Ye Wei.

‘High-level Myst stance, Slideflash!’ Lu Qianying smiled as a yellow-glowing rune sequence appeared under his feet.

“Swoosh!”

Lu Qianying’s figure became blurry. He accelerated to the speed of a two-star condensed prime Warrior.

In a blink of an eye, a chubby, red-haired old man appeared in front of Ye Wei. “You can’t run now!” Lu Qianying’s fingers curled into a claw shape, aimed right at Ye Wei’s head.

“Rumble!”

A surge of primal energy rushed from Lu Qianying’s dantian to his hand. A burst of runes appeared in the air and transformed into a twenty feet long and wide spectral palm. It flew straight to Ye Wei’s skull.

“Oh, hello!” Ye Wei stared above as the giant palm fell onto him. His lips curled up as he swiped his hand to the side, shooting a rain of Qi swords from his palm towards the valley.

Concurrently, a tearing sound came out of Ye Wei’s left hand. A faint green hue wrapped around his body instantaneously.

“Phewm!”

Ye Wei’s figure faded. He turned into thin gray smoke and was carried

by a strong gust of wind. he pulled a whole mile ahead of Lu Qianying, going into the valley.

There was no pause in Ye Wei actions. It was apparent to the chubby elder that his target had calculated being caught.

Chapter 179: Split

Ye Wei, the inheritor of the Glacial Emperor's legacy, had an almost unlimited supply of weaponry. What others deemed rare and precious he cared little for.

Unless they contained earth stances, there were not a lot of scrolls that interested him, except, of course, rare scrolls that had functions other than standard offensive or defensive stances.

"You little prick!" Lu Qianying had chased Ye Wei for the entire evening. He could even feel the fabric on Ye Wei's face mask. He felt outraged, his target had so casually slipped away.

Lu Qianying glanced at the valley and grunted heavily. He decided to enter with slight hesitation in his eyes and hindrance in his movements.

Lu Li and the rest of the Lu's men entered the valley following the elder's lead.

"Bang!"

Just as Lu Qianying and his men entered the valley, the Qi swords fired by Ye Wei had entered a cave at the bottom of the valley. These golden energy blades crashed onto the cave's sides and exploded.

'Howl! Howl!'

The explosion shook the cave. When the explosion quieted, there emerged a few hundred pairs of eyes; they opened simultaneously, furious and bloodthirsty.

"Roar!"

Inside the dark cave, the pack of wolves' eyes resembled hundreds of fierce yellow lights. Their eyes glowing like the moon in the dark morning air.

"Rumble! Rumble! Rumble!"

At the exact moment Lu Xianying, Lu Li and the other ten-star condensed prime level pursuers entered the valley, a few hundred blood

wolves rushed out of the cave. The sound was like a stampede of nearly a thousand paws stomping heavily. All the trees shook, and the stones on the ground loosened and rumbled.

“Shit! Blood wolves, a large pack of them!” the Lu’s heard the deafening howl. They were terrified to see the glowing red-yellow eyes between the branches.

“Sweet Sages, there are hundreds of them!”

The Warriors’ legs shook and their guts churned; intimidated by the blood wolves’ sinister reputation, they were told since they were young that these wolves would kill you or die trying.

“You little bastard! I will cut you into little pieces whenever I find you!” Lu Qianying’s face paled. His veins bulged up and his bloodshot eyes were as red as a beet. He looked in Ye Wei’s direction imagining he was killing right then.

Being tricked by a kid was more than just humiliating for a returned prime Warrior, it was shameful. Furthermore, Lu Qianying was struggling to stay calm after a restless night.

Lu Qianying’s sensing stance was blocked by the thick rocks while Ye Wei’s will-force went into the caves and detected the wolves before any of the Lu’s did.

Lu Qianying was raging. He felt like a seasoned hunter being humiliated by its prey. He stopped and stood still. His golden Qi rushed out of his dantian, the pressure of the energy burst dug a three hundred feet wide and three feet deep pit; the fissure on the ground spread across half of the valley.

‘High-level Myst stance, Golden Mountain Seal!’ Lu Qianying’s bloodshot eyes spotted Ye Wei, who was hiding next to a cliff.

He ignored the charging wolves and did not bother to protect Lu Li and the other Warriors. He swiped his hand forth and made a few rune sequences.

The cubby elder was more than ready to lose a few of his men if that

ensured Ye Wei's death. For him, it was more important to keep the secret about the Drakehead safe than a few lives. It was for the greater good.

The burst of golden runic light condensed in the sky. It formed a sixty foot tall pyramid shape. The sheer mass of the runes gave it a force of attraction as well as an immense pressure.

The pyramid crushed and compressed the air, a rumbling sound echoed throughout the valley while tens of blood wolves were smashed and pressed into a meat paste.

“Awoo!”

“Awoo!”

The three high-grade blood wolf leaders saw the violent death of their allies. With their superior and almost human-like intellect, they identified the murderer to be Lu Qianying. The leaders of the pack howled furiously. The runes on their bones began to flow; they sought revenge.

The seven mid-grade blood wolves followed their leaders. Their bloodthirsty eyes were set on the enormous pyramid.

The stronger ones of the pack accelerated and turned into trails of blood in the sky.

The wolves jumped. Their bodies flashed beside Ye Wei, but his Qi-less presence was not their target. Their revenge filled noses pointed at Lu Qianying.

“Awoo!”

Hundreds of wolves howled. Their heads pointed up towards the sky, mourning but also cursing. They were angered by the human intruders and their violent murderous act.

“Boom! Boom! Boom!”

The trails of red proceeded in astonishing speed, crushing into the runic pyramid.

The pyramid's fearsome force knocked the mid-grade blood wolves back. They fell on the ground and were paralyzed by the jagged rocks. The

three pack leaders were bleeding out from their mouths.

The wolf pack leaders were a bit stronger than the ten-star condensed prime Warriors. However, the forbidden high-level Myst stance used by a returned prime Warrior was not something they could defeat or defend themselves from.

The pack did not stop the pyramid from falling, but its path had been altered.

“Rumble!”

The pyramid flew right next to Ye Wei. It shadowed his face before landing on the rocky cliff. The pyramid’s raging energy exploded, and the cliff collapsed. All hundred feet of the cliff slid down, the east side of the valley was now flattened.

“Is this the power of returned prime Warrior with only a flick of his finger!?” Ye Wei’s pupils dilated. His back was soaked with sweat. All the hair on his arm and legs stood up from his goosebumps. ‘The returned prime Warrior’s power was unnatural!’

Recently, Ye Wei began to be more confident with his cultivation level, but he now realized how vulnerable he truly was. He saw the wrath of the returned prime Warrior with his own eyes. He was not sure if he had enough time to avoid the pyramid strike even with the aid of scrolls. He needed to escape quickly as possible.

“Lu’s you can have fun with the blood wolves, I am out of here!” Ye Wei inhaled long and deep. After calming down, he stomped the floor, leaving a trail of star-like runes behind him as he escaped to the outskirts of the mountains.

After witnessing the power of the chubby elder, Ye Wei just wanted to be as far away from the fatal danger.

“You brat! Where do you think you are going? You’re staying here with us!” Lu Qianying could see Ye Wei was trying to get away. He grunted and tried to leap towards the disguised kid’s direction. However just as he was going to leap forth, he found himself surrounded by hundreds of wolves.

The fanged beasts were violent and reckless. Although they could not threaten Lu Qianying's life, they were capable of immobilizing him momentarily. When he managed to free himself, Ye Wei was out of his sight entirely.

Furious and crazed, Lu Qianying once again activated his sensing stance. Nevertheless, this time, it was all too late. He could not sense the tiny amount of energy the mysterious assassin gave off.

"This kid wouldn't dare enter the mountain range. He has to be hiding somewhere in the outskirt area. Now, go and search for him!" Lu Qianying's face was completely red, "I want the ten-star condensed prime Warriors to lead a team of five each. Cover every inch of ground back towards the bay area. Bring me that kid dead or alive!"

"And if you don't bring me that kid, consider yourselves exiled!" he irately shouted. His red hair fluttered in the breeze as he forcefully tried to scan around.

"Yes sir!" Each and every one of the Lu's bent down, bowing to Lu Qianying's supremacy.

Though the teams were all condensed prime Warriors, they did not feel entirely safe being in the area. They just had a near death experience involving the large pack of blood wolves. They would rather leave and remain alive.

"Come, take a jade amulet, each of you. If you see that kid or feel like you are in danger, break it. The kid we are chasing is armed with many rare scrolls. I fear he has more tricks up his sleeves." Lu Qianying spoke as he handed each of the team leaders a forbidden high-level Myst scroll.

"I don't care if you have to sacrifice your lives, or even your teammates'. Just stay alive long enough to keep the kid there for twenty seconds, and I will be there. The amulet will help me locate you."

"Yes sir!" shouted Lu Li. This morning the head elder's grandchild had acted his most subservient he had ever done in his entire life or would ever.

Chapter 180: Thundercrack Stamp

Lu Li, Lu Hai and the other four ten-star condensed prime Warriors each took five cultivators with them in their search for Ye Wei on the outskirts of North Barren Mountains.

All of them, even Lu Li were afraid of the consequence of failing their assignment, and they feared facing the powerful assassin as well. Lu Li just fiercely wanted to annihilate him.

Ye Wei flew through the woods as he expanded the range of his will-force's reach. He knew the returned prime Warrior's senses given by their will-force was potent enough to detect energy from more than ten miles away.

Five miles was the limit of Ye Wei's will-force reach. Any further Ye Wei could not sense if the object or person was farther from him. 'This is dangerous. They can set a trap if they know my location while I am oblivious on theirs!' Ye Wei gritted his teeth and continued to channel his will-force.

'Six miles...'

'Seven miles...' His veins bulged up, and his Sentient rattled as he reached his limit.

"No! This is still not enough!" He injected Qi into his Sentient and dug deep to the mystic mount within.

The golden presence of the mystic mount shone bright; Ye Wei could feel his will-force thickening.

'Ten miles... Twenty, thirty!'

Ye Wei could finally sense his pursuers. He felt the Lu's movements. Judging by what he could sense, none of the small teams, not even Lu Qianying himself, had any idea on Ye Wei's whereabouts.

'The returned prime Warrior and the teams of condensed prime Warriors slowed down. I might even be able to sneak back to the Drakehead and train a bit more if I am careful!'

“They’ve just split up!” Ye Wei mumbled to himself as he sensed the slight change in Qi disturbance, ‘that’s a good sign. It means they don’t know where I am!’

Ye Wei’s eyes glistened Although coordinated, the Lu’s every single move was read by Ye Wei. He noticed they were split farther and farther from each other. ‘I’ve been chased for an entire night, I think it’s time to turn the tables.’

‘But how should I do it?’ He was still haunted by the scene of the valley collapsing because of just one strike from the returned prime Warrior.

“I can’t defend myself against a forbidden high-level Myst stance, not when it is used by a returned prime Warrior.” Ye Wei muttered.

‘Though it will be hard to find a chance like this, when the all the teams are closer to each other again.’ Ye Wei decided to launch a counter attack. ‘I have been feeling anxious the entire night. Now it’s my turn for you to feel anxious. I need to kill a couple of you to send a clear, direct message!’

Taking advantage of the Lu’s split search, Ye Wei quietly tracked down one of the weaker teams. He was ready to silence all of them. He hid all his Qi presence. While sensing where the returned prime Warriors were, he calculated the best time and place for the surprise attack.

On the other hand, Lu Qianying was clear that his men were no match for Ye Wei. He was trying his best to keep an equal distance between himself and each of the search teams.

The seasoned elder knew he was looking for a needle in a haystack, so he kept his distance. It was his intention all along to use the six teams as bait. He correctly assumed that it was in the assassin’s interest to eliminate as many Lu’s as possible.

However, he was one step behind since he had no knowledge about Ye Wei’s sensory capabilities.

‘One of the search teams is closing in, six of them in total, the strongest one of them is a ten-star condensed prime Warrior...’ Ye Wei was

constantly assessing the situation. He waited patiently for his timing, though.

After hours of stalking, Ye Wei saw his window of opportunity. He took a scroll out of his bag and sped towards the team furthest away from Lu Qianying.

“Rip!”

The enchanted scroll was torn; sequences of runes bursted out from the tear. Ye Wei was suddenly wrapped in a green runic light. He rushed towards the isolated team with speed of a returned prime Warrior.

Both of them being forbidden high-level Myst stances, the Green Shade stance within the scroll was at least as quick as Lu Qianying’s Slideflash stance.

Ye Wei took more than one of these scrolls from the Glacial Emperor. Although he preferred using them defensively, he believed using them offensively also would gain him tempo.

“Swoosh...”

Ye Wei became a cyan flash. He quietly advanced two miles distance. His gaze was hysterical, and he attentively looked forward to seeing his victims.

‘Lu Li?’ Ye Wei was close enough to identify the energy source, ‘a direct descendant of the Lu’s bloodline! This was worth the hours of stalking!’

‘Goodbye!’ Ye Wei rushed forward, activated the second evolution of Supernova stance as he shot six Peerless Swords to his targets.

“Plop!”

“Clang!”

The Qi Swords hit simultaneously five condensed prime Warriors. Their bodies were penetrated from behind. None of them could even see their killer’s ice cold eyes before they died.

The dead bodies flew backwards from the Ye Wei’s powerful sword’s force. They were eventually stopped by the trees.

It did not come to a surprise for Ye Wei that he was able to kill five condensed prime Warrior from the dark, but the man left standing did startle him.

“It’s you!” Lu Li saw his dead teammates. He turned around and recognized the familiar figure. “How dare you! This time I am ready for your cowardly ambush! You won’t be able to run this time!”

Lu Li quickly leaped away from Ye Wei; he crushed the jade amulet with his large muscular hands. He was still injured; consequently, he concluded before he started the search that he would not fight, but instead just buy time until Lu Qianying arrived to finish the assassin off.

“Ha, and you call me a coward?” Ye Wei immediately guessed the Lu Li’s intention. He narrowed his eyes and shot ten more Qi swords right at Lu Li’s chest.

“Gotcha!” Lu Qianying felt the burst of energy released by the broken amulet from forty miles away.

“Swoosh!”

Lu Qianying levitated, and he flew towards Lu Li’s current location at a fearsome speed.

“Same trick? How naive!” Lu Li chuckled. He clenched his fist and channeled his Qi to strengthen his body further. His muscles bulged up, and his skin gained a mysterious metallic shine.

“Titanic form is the most defensive out of the Lu’s three earth grade cultivation formulas!” Lu Li’s disdainful smile grew wide. His fist flew towards Ye Wei.

“Clang! Clang Clang!”

After a deafening sharp noise, the Qi swords dispersed. Lu Li was unharmed except a few shallow scratches on his fist.

“Eh!?” Both Lu Li and Ye Wei were surprised. They both underestimated their opponent.

“Pfft!” Lu Li’s face darkened. He grunted and stomped the ground; his Qi

swept the ground, sending a shockwave straight at Ye Wei.

‘He is stronger than me, but I don't need to beat him. I just need to buy my time until the elder comes!’ Lu Li was bold but not completely dumb. He knew what to expect.

‘Starblink Steps!’

Ye Wei frowned. He quickly channeled his Qi to his feet; the star-like rune sequences under his feet buffered the shockwave while he was charging towards Lu Li.

“Swoosh!”

Lu Li was struggling to follow Ye Wei’s ghostly figure. He threw his fist forth repeatedly to create a safe zone in front of him. However, before his eyes registered where his opponent was he felt a cold breeze behind his head.

Ye Wei aimed right at the back of Lu Li’s skull. His fist was infused with Peerless Sword energy and traveled at the speed of lightning.

“Clang!”

The sound of an iron hammer striking a rock sounded when Ye Wei’s fist crushed against Lu Li’s head. “What a tough body! I don’t think I have enough time to destroy him before the return prime Warrior comes!”

Ye Wei stared at Lu Li, counting the time in his heart, ‘I’ve landed all my Qi swords onto the back of his head, at the human body’s weak spot, I don’t understand.’ He didn’t even hurt Lu Li, and Lu Li’s strikes didn’t hit Ye Wei even once. It seemed they were at a stand still.

“You are still not strong enough to hurt me! Just surrender now before I tear you apart!” Lu Li screamed and laughed. His heavy fists fell onto Ye Wei like a rain of meteors.

“Bang!”

Ye Wei’s Qi Swords and Lu Li’s metallic fist clashed against each other. The impact turned stones into dust and sent a rippling energy wave through the woods, snapping the tree trunks in its path.

The enormous recoil stunned Ye Wei slightly. He absorbed the main impact with a backflip while the star-like runes under his feet kept his body steady.

“Earth grade formula, huh?” Ye Wei shook off the numbing tingle in his shoulder. He noticed the similarities between Lu Li’s technique and the Polaris Academy’s formula.

‘His formula can redirect impact too! It’s a shame the falling star form is unfinished. I am sure the Ye Supreme had worked on it, and I can feel its potential.’ Ye Wei again tried to learn his

opponent’s tricks in combat.

‘Any moment now, though elder Qianying should be here! I have to keep this kid with me!’ Lu Li glared at Ye Wei, like a wolf about to feast on his prey. He clenched his fist, his muscles bulged up, and his hair hardened and stood up like rows of steel needles, a metallic texture appeared in his eyes.

“Crack! Crack!”

Lu Li’s arms were now twice their original size; the muscles rattled as he groaned.

‘High-level Myst stance, Thundercrack Stamp!’ Lu Li’s Qi turned into runes. The runes were wrapping around his arm, and it became electrically charged. He leaped up and struck at Ye Wei. He covered all his escape routes with bolts of runic lightning.

Chapter 181: Mind Compass

“Rumble!”

The raging energy from Lu Li’s stance pressed Ye Wei into the ground. A palm-shaped mass of runes blocked all of Ye Wei’s escape routes while sharp arcing bolts occasionally struck fissures on the solid rocks close by.

‘Shit, I’m running out of time!’ Ye Wei panicked. He was worried about the returned prime Warrior catching up.

“The Zodiac Sword is as sharp as my mind is when I draw the runes to it.” Ye Wei muttered to himself. His years of training flashed before him, and he felt inspired by the Lu’s Myst stance.

Ye Wei’s eyes went cold; his Qi surged out like a flooding river. “Let me show you what you just taught me!” With will-force on his fingertips, he shaped his Qi to runes, and transformed them into thirty-six Peerless Qi Swords. ‘You can stop a sword, but you can’t stop a damn flooding river!’

The final form of the Peerless Sword consisted of three hundred and sixty Qi swords. It consisted of a fearsome river of refined, sharp bolts of energy. Although Ye Wei was not close to understanding the sky stance’s complete form, he was able imitate the essence of the Zodiac Sword.

Ye Wei relaxed his body and stretched his arms. Both of them straight as a sword, both of them aimed at Lu Li’s stance above his head.

“Zoom! Zoom!”

All thirty-six Qi swords intertwined, glided upwards smoothly against the gravitating lightning palm.

“Bang!”

The bound Qi sword struck the center of Lu Li’s stance. The falling in momentum became an advantage for Ye Wei; the slowness in Lu Li’s attack made it easier to penetrate the lightning palm.

“Plop!”

The connection of the stances was brief. Lu Li was paralyzed by a shrill

sound of the Qi sword tearing through his best stance.

“How is this possible!?” The elder’s grandson could not do a thing. He hopelessly watched the runes fall apart. Lu Li never doubted Ye Wei’s strength. He genuinely thought he found a way to defend himself, but he realized he was outclassed.

‘I’ve disappointed you, elder Qianying...’ Lu Li’s body was drowning in the massive stream of Qi created by Ye Wei. His body began to chip and crackle, it was soon covered with bright red. The metallic glow on his skin faded, and a rusty smell grew intense as his blood evaporated.

The young Lu fell before he could even use the scroll he was given.

Ye Wei breathed heavily, imitating a sky stance’s Qi flow at his cultivation level had taken an immense toll on him. His body was weakened, and his face went pale. Though, he managed to drop his opponent.

‘I still have time!’ Ye Wei took Lu Li’s interspatial bag before he reached into his own to find a Green Shade scroll.

“Rip!”

A faint green light wrapped around Ye Wei; he instantly travelled two miles in a flash and headed back into the mountains without hesitation.

‘Ten miles, this is how much I need to keep the distance between me and him. He is faster and stronger than me, I can’t take any risks.’ Ye Wei thought while looking towards the Lu Qianying’s direction. He sensed the warrior’s Qi. He finally felt a safe distance away, but he didn’t entirely feel safe.

“Imbecile!” Lu Qianying screamed. He arrived at the scene five seconds after Ye Wei took off. His bloodshot eyes widened as he saw all the dead bodies. His gaze eventually set on Lu Li’s ravaged corpse. “Don’t you know your limits!? What am I going to tell your granddad!?”

The elder furiously looked around to see if the assassin left and clues. Yet, there was nothing but woodland critters.

“Shit!” Lu Qianying turned around and rushed back to the direction he came from.

“You like playing games, huh!?” He noticed the Qi presence of the other teams fading, but he was too late. He was infuriated by lifeless bodies he saw while departing.

“Useless... F**king, useless!” He counted a dozen more dead bodies. None of them seemed to have struggled before they died.

Lu Qianying lifted his head and clenched his fists. He cried and howled like a crazed animal. His Qi bursted out in all directions.

“Bang!”

The golden energy surge swept the woods. It turned trees into logs and dirt into a thick screen of smoke. All of a sudden, the beautiful nature became a wasteland as if it was stampeded by a pack of king grade wild beasts.

Lu Qianying harshly exhaled and carefully took a scroll from his inside pocket. His eyes twitched regretfully.

The whole scroll was dark. There was a subtle pulsing glow, synchronized with its slow but pressuring aura.

The scroll containing an earth stance was the most valuable possession Lu Qianying carried with him. It was given to him as a gift by the Lu Patriarch when he broke through to become a returned prime Warrior. It contained the Mind Compass stance.

Although the stance was not aggressive at all, its unique function gave it an unmatched value.

Considering one of the victims was the head elder’s grandson, he could possibly be facing capital punishment if he did not capture the person responsible for this outrage.

Lu Qianying ground his teeth. He opened the scroll and tore it swiftly.

“Zoom! Zoom!”

A long rune sequence appeared in the sky. There was a touch of gold to

its vivid hue. It kept stretching and eventually covered a hundred miles radius around Lu Xianying.

“Whizz!”

The runes shrank quickly into Lu Qianying’s head. He was suddenly able to see in his mind the life energy of all creatures within a hundred miles. While his Qi energy became undetectable.

“I will catch you this time, you little bastard!” Lu Qianying muttered. He quickly located Ye Wei through the image in his mind. With a heavy stomp, he became a shadow. This shadow zoomed towards Ye Wei like an arrow whizzing through air; nothing stopped him pursuing his target now.

Ye Wei was over thirty miles away from Lu Qianying. He was not aware of the danger he was in.

‘This is a warning. North Hill Bay is the Ye’s land, and the Drakehead is therefore the Ye’s property!’ He was proud of his secret mission. ‘This is not enough, though. I have to kill as many of them as I can. The more time they have to rethink their strategy the better.’

‘There are only three teams left. I should be able to finish them.’ Ye Wei was constantly calculating the best execution for his next move. ‘It’s good that cousin Zhong did not follow, less to worry about when I strike.’

With his extraordinary soul sensitivity, Ye Wei stalked the Lu’s like an opportunistic predator who waited for the best window to strike.

Ye Wei was heading back into the mountain range, avoiding the wild beasts, ‘My revenge has just begun! I will kill every last one of you, one at a time. I will look into your eyes before I crush your hearts!’ He sat next to a tall rock. He took a pill and began to use the Falling Star form.

The Supernova stance was taking a toll on Ye Wei. His Qi was drained and his body was exhausted. He was desperate to recover quickly, so he could finish what he started earlier.

Ye Wei expanded his detection range as he recharged his will-force, but he could not sense Lu Qianying’s incoming. He focused on recuperating

rather than being on guard since he already left the dangerous scene.

Ye Wei had his eyes closed. The setting sun warmed his cheeks. He was relaxing and resting in the quiet wilderness for the first time after more than half a day of running.

Less than half a minute after he sat down, he felt a strange chilling breeze. He opened his eyes.

“Crack! Crack!”

The breeze intensified; the trees around Ye Wei began to bend towards him.

“Shit! How did I not feel any of this?!” Ye Wei’s face changed. He stood up and quickly grabbed the iron talisman from his belt.

“Bang!”

A pressuring presence froze Ye Wei in place. A chubby figure appeared right in front of him.

The elder’s hair was fluttering in the wind. The runes under his feet were condensed into small golden clouds after each step he took, thus leaving a trail of golden mist behind him.

There was no primal feathers behind Lu Qianying’s back. The returned prime was levitating by his own power; his mastery over natural primal energy.

“Any last words?” Lu Qianying stared furiously down onto Ye Wei. His demeaning gaze intimidated and startled the unsuspecting Ye Wei.

Chapter 182: The Gathering

Lu Qianying's fearsome presence encaged Ye Wei. While Lu Qianying approached Ye Wei, sequences of runes surged out of his body.

'It's not even a stance yet!' Ye Wei ground his teeth. He could not move an inch. He was bewildered by the returned prime Warrior's control over him.

'Wait, I can take advantage of this!' Ye Wei relaxed his body. Dropping his defenses, he allowed the Lu elder's Qi to penetrate his body. Then he directed the energy to his bones, using it to help transform the runes on his bones.

'I guess this will be good for now, but I need to stay alive!' Ye Wei was enduring the excruciating pain. He held tightly onto his iron talisman, waiting for the best moment to strike back.

Ye Wei slowly lifted his head to take a good look at his returned prime level opponent. His eyes lit up and his mouth opened to speak, "the Drakehead is not something you Lu's can monopolize for your own profit! I've ordered my men to spread the news regarding the Drakehead's location if I didn't return back tonight. I would love to know the royal families would react! If they found out your family was not planning to share the treasures, they will kill you all!"

"What!? Who are you!? How do you know this much!?" Lu Qianying's face drastically changed. He slightly held back his Qi and stared cautiously at Ye Wei.

It was not difficult for Lu Qianying to kill Ye Wei,. However, having everyone learn about the Drakehead, and keeping the Lu's family's trustworthy image and influence, would be..

Lu Qianying couldn't tell if the assassin was bluffing or not. He stared coldly at the masked man, calculating the most appropriate response.

"You are a liar! Show me some kind of identification. Give me a reason not to kill you!" Lu Qianying screamed his ultimatum. His golden Qi

become thicker and grasped Ye Wei harder.

Meanwhile, he casted his will-force upon the assassin. Lu Qianying attempted to extract information by mental torture.

However, the returned primed Warrior's specialty was not effective, Ye Wei's Sentient vibrated and shone golden, rendering Lu Qianying's will-force useless.

"I've seen this trick before. Even then I was not impressed by it!" Ye Wei chuckled. He hoped by angering the elder would allow him some time to come up with an escape plan.

"Eh?" Lu Qianying was concerned. He was surprised Ye Wei was not affected by his presence. It confirmed his suspicion that this assassin was indeed likely related to a powerful martial family.

The Lu family's power reigned supreme in the Qing state, but in Lu Qianying's eyes, the assassin could very well be related to one of the royal families' rivals. He was therefore afraid to get himself involved in something he would not be able to handle. He hesitated to kill Ye Wei because he didn't want his family's future to be in peril.

Furthermore, he could not risk potentially exposing the Lu's secret mission to the rest of the world.

Thankfully for Ye Wei, a moments hesitation was all that he needed. He quickly leaped forth with the aid of the Starblink stance, 'this is good, if I feel him approaching I will just use another scroll!'

"You cheeky little..." Lu Qianying's cold gaze lit up, 'if I can't catch you, Lu Li's death will become my responsibility!'

"Kid, I wouldn't be annoying now if I were you. In the end, I will be the one torturing you, so you better cooperative." Lu Qianying's Qi transformed to a massive hand-shape. It fiercely shot forth towards Ye Wei.

'My life is worth more than this scroll I guess.' Ye Wei was startled and unsure. He kept advancing, not willing to tear the scroll unless absolutely necessary.

“The North Barren Mountains is not men’s territory!” A low, screeching voice sounded. Lu Qianying turned his head. Ye Wei decided against tearing the scroll and instead he observed who was coming towards them.

There was a cruel tone to the shrill voice. Ye Wei ears felt a piercing pain. He was consumed by an unexplainable sense of fear. From what he could feel, the person who just came was at least ten times stronger than Lu Qianying.

Ye Wei’s face became pale. He even blacked out for a second. Thankfully his Sentient was enforced by the mystic mount.

“It’s a demon king...” Lu Qianying gasped. He shivered as he witnessed the disintegration of his runic golden palm. He lifted his head to look at the darkening sky. ‘F**k, I shouldn’t have followed him this deep into the mountains...’

“I knew what you’ve done to the bloodwolves, I was nice enough to ignore how you disturbed the peace... Growl! How dare you come to our home! Are you trying to rub it in my face?” Another rough voice sounded.

“It’s a king grade wild beast!” Lu Qianying exclaimed. His face turned sheet white, and his feet were uncontrollably shaking. He knew he was staring at death itself.

“Rumble!”

A pulse of primal energy shook the sky while a creature that was as large as a small hill stopped by. It was a king grade beast, and its mile long body was covered by dark moss green scales. On top of its armor-guarded spine were four golden wings.

“Quadwing Barren Beast!?” Lu Qianying was unable to remain calm. He took a few clumsy steps back before completely freezing up. He stood as still as a statue in front of all beasts residing in the mountain range.

“Swoosh! Swoosh!”

Thirty-six arcs of fog bows brightened the dark sky. Each of the arcs quickly condensed to lotus paddle shapes and together formed a large rosette seat. A surge of energy created an opening in the middle of the

rosette. A man came forth from the dimension within the mysterious structure.

This pale man stood on top of the rosette, glanced at Ye Wei and chuckled. He then scornfully moved his attention to the returned prime Warrior.

Lu Qianying crossed the demon's gaze. His pupils shrunk to the size of a needle's eye. The demon king was in humanoid form. He looked not a day older than twenty-four years of age. His perfectly proportionate face made his sinister presence slightly less repulsive. Yet, the strange glow in his eyes sucked his victim in a captivating, foreboding darkness.

Three more demon king and six more king grade beasts arrived. The demons stood behind the rosette seat while the wild beasts were levitating in the shadow of their leader's wings.

'This is the Skeleton Demon King. He is the third and strongest son of the Nightfall Demon Emperor.' Lu Qianying was uncontrollably stuttering and shivering. He wondered what attracted all these wild beasts and demons when any single one of them could have easily killed him.

'The Skeleton Demon King possessed the strength of a eight-star returned prime Warrior, meaning even the Patriarch could not do anything...' Lu Qianying was spasming.

The Skeleton Demon King stared at Lu Qianying. He was calm; it looked like he had no intention to fight; thought, that did not matter since Lu Qianying was unable to move..

Released from Lu Qianying's enchanted will-force, Ye Wei was free to move. He could not see any difference between a normal human being and the demon before him, but his stomach acted like it was eating him from the inside. He knew he was looking at something evil; therefore, he clenched tighter to the iron talisman and the scroll in his other hand.

Ye Wei had no idea if the gadgets were going to save his life or not. Nevertheless, he had no other choices.

"A one-star returned prime Warrior who dares to wander this deep into

the North Barren Mountains, are you insane or just suicidal? You know more than well that this is no place for the living!” The Demon King spoke. He snickered at Lu Qianying’s idiocy. He then nodded at the Quadwing Barren Beast.

“When I heard that some bloodwolves were killed, I thought we were attacked by the Royal Huyan family! Oh well, you can be the appetizer of the night for the young ones.” The winged beast spoke human tongue again. It inhaled air as it lifted its head. A large golden beam of molten lava erupted out from the dark deep abyss of the beast’s mouth.

Lu Qianying was telling his body to move, but it did not work. He defensively watched as the beam flew at him. ‘What is he talking about? Are the royals around? If so, I might have a chance of living!’

The elder did not want to die, thus he bit his tongue. The intense pain reawakened his senses; he then quickly moved out of the impact zone.

Once he landed on the ground and steadied his footing, he channeled his Qi and shaped it into runes with his fingers as quick as he could. Never did he think he would use his best stance for the chance to survive.

‘Forbidden high-level Myst stance, Frozen Goldsplit Sword!’

Chapter 183: Huyan

The Sky Freeze Formula was not only the precursor to Frozen Goldsplit Sword, it also synergized to forbidden high-level Myst stance, making the cultivator momentarily stronger while using the stance.

Motivated by the will to live, Lu Qianying's Qi flowed faster than usual. He quickly drew thousands of runes. The temperature around his chubby body dropped drastically, and the ground began to frost over, quickly turning white.

“Zoom!”

The returned prime Warrior's runes turned into white flakes. They then gravitated towards Lu Qianying's hand, forming a white Qi blade. Lu Qianying thought he dodged the lava pillar, but he soon realized that the beast's incinerating breath was following him.

He lifted the sword and struck the lava. He knew that he had to somehow deflect the incoming attack since he did not have the speed to avoid it.

“Bang!”

The white Qi sword melted; it evaporated before it even touched the lava. The runes were reduced into a thin layer of scattered energy.

The Quadwing Barren Beast had the strength equivalent to a seven-star returned prime Warrior. Lu Qianying, the one-star returned prime Warrior, was aware his resistance was futile. Nonetheless, he did all he could in hopes that his effort would help him survive.

“Rumble!”

The lava pillar fell onto Lu Qianying. It engulfed him and burrowed him into the ground. The impact caused a brief earthquake. The elder's bloody and burnt body was left motionless in the pit created by the beast's breath.

“How is he still breathing!?” The Quadwing Barren Beast frowned in shame. The scales on his face made a sizzling sound. He was afraid his

allies would doubt his capabilities since he did not kill Lu Qianying as planned.

“Pffft!” The Quadwing Barren Beast grunted. He lifted his hoofs and stomped down at Lu Qianying.

“Swoosh!”

The powerful leg strokes sent shockwaves down onto the pit. The hill around it began to collapse.

‘This guy can’t even defend himself against the beast’s breath!’ Ye Wei ran and found shelter more than three hundred feet away. He was desperately hiding behind a tree, shaking the whole time while tightly holding his talisman.

It was obvious to the young five-star condensed prime Warrior that he could easily become the next victim. He slowed his breath and contained his energy the best he could. He realized he would not be able to escape the beasts and the demons if they were eager to chase.

Just before the hoof was about to take Lu Qianying’s life, as many as twenty beams of light crossed the sky. A thunderous hoarse chant stunned the beast.

A cultivator appeared on the end of each light beams. All of them were returned prime Warrior. and all of them were stronger than Lu Qianying.

“Viled winged abomination! You will pay for injuring a returned prime Warrior!” His powerful voice echoed the mountain range. Seven turquoise Qi blades ignited and flew towards the winged beast’s feet.

The beast’s gigantic blue eyes disdainfully stared at the Qi blades, “Klapa Turquoise Blades? What is the Royal Huyan family doing here!?” He nimbly turned his enormous body and stomped forth. He defended himself with his sturdy hoofs.

“Punish them!” The royal squad’s leader shouted as his stance crashed onto the winged beast’s limbs. While the squad, the returned prime Warriors rushed towards the seven king grade wild beasts to his command.

“You can clean the dirt on the ground with your faces!” The beast was bold. He fearlessly led his pack to the spirited human cultivators.

The Demon King understood his ally was in a tight situation. He lifted his hand and curled it into a claw. He then struck towards the squad leader. “Your kind owe me one!”

The demons beast, and royals started a deadly brawl. The clash of forces created an energy maelstrom in the sky it wrapped the dimension, dark scars, opening to other realms were spreading above the battlefield.

Ye Wei could feel the ground he stood on was shaking tremendously. The trees and rocks were breaking and sinking into the soil.

A surge of energy erupted out of the maelstrom. It hit the ground while a pulsating wave spread outwards through the mountains. The towering hills collapsed and the land cracked where the wave passed through.

To the battlers, Ye Wei was just a part of the environment, unnoticed.

Under the pressure of all the powerful presences, Ye Wei could not move. He too began to sink into the ground, but he was looking a step ahead. He used this outside energy to power the runic transformation on his bones.

‘With the next Supernova evolution, I will be able to have the strength of a returned prime Warrior!’ Ye Wei lusted after power which would give him the ability to escape and protect what his ancestor left to his family.

Ye Wei looked around and spotted Lu Qianying. He could see the elder was wiggling, though, the ground was trembling. He wanted to finish him off, but he was too afraid that one of the royal squad would intervene.

“Ouch!”

The runic patterns on Ye Wei’s bones kept transforming. He was overwhelmed and engulfed by pain as the transformation process was about to reach its end.

Even in pain, he was alert, though. Although none of the demons or beast saw him as a threat, he knew he could easily become colossal

damage. He felt like he was lounging in a burning room.

“Shit!”

The surface waves were heading towards Ye Wei’s direction. He tore an Instant Shadow scroll immediately since he knew he would become miles underground within seconds otherwise.

“Zoom!”

Sequences of runes burst out of the scroll. They wrapped around Ye Wei and made him disappear from this terrifying and threatening scene. Within the same second, a whole globe of light vanished and reappeared a hundred miles away from its original location.

“Rumble!”

After Ye Wei’s departure, the battlefield became a thirty miles wide bald spot within the mountains.

“Just in time!” Ye Wei glanced at the brawl from a distance. He gasped as he realized the scale of the destruction. There was no signs of life; only debris and blood remained at the battlefield.

“I would have died if it wasn’t for the scroll! I need to become stronger, at least a returned prime Warrior level!” Ye Wei inhaled deeply and muttered. His eyes shone determination.

‘At least I don’t have to worry about Lu Qianying now.’ He looked at the destroyed battlefield and thought. ‘If he was willing to kill me, he should have been ready to die as well!’

Ye Wei sat down to adjust the Qi flow in his body but could not focus. He was too agitated and concerned over the beasts, the demons, and the royal family’s involvement in the search of the Drakehead.

The images of the battle haunted and teased him. He clenched his fist stood up and looked towards the Drakehead. ‘There is no other way! I have to finish the third Supernova Evolution.’

“I have very limited time to improve my cultivation.” Ye Wei mumbled. He was nervous. If anyone who were involved in the fight moments ago

realized how close they were to the treasure, the Drakehead would be lost forever.

“Twenty-four days had past since Lu Ren was killed. The green sandalwood box’s effect is only going to last for another week at most!” Ye Wei bit his nails as he muttered, “They will know Lu Feng’s and my involvement. Then they will be able to guess easily that we have been sabotaging their missions.” He shook his head and continued, “There is another elder stationed close by. Lu Feng’s and my life would be at risk!”

After clearing his mind, Ye Wei sped towards the secret pond. He didn’t have to worry much about the Lu’s wandering close to the Drakehead now that he had killed most of the search team leaders.

Ye Wei leaped upwards to the top of the woods. Using a springing motion from the trees, he achieved an astounding speed. It only took him less than an hour before he was at the pondside again.

The young Runemaster was completely focused. He took a deep breath and wrapped his body with protective layer of Qi and will-force. Immediately, he dove straight down to the bottom of the body of freezing water.

Chapter 184: Report

Back in Green Moon City, Lu Feng was cultivating, sitting with bent legs on top of one of the City Lord Castle's watchtowers. Although he seemed focused, his twitching brows were showing the opposite.

He had returned to the Lu's base since he lost Ye Wei two days ago. He figured the safest thing to do would be hiding with the Lu's so he would have alibi when asked if he knew anything about what happened at North Hill Bay.

Lu Feng cared about himself more than anything or anyone else, but knowing that he could never complete his revenge alone, he worried about Ye Wei.

'What the hell! It's almost been three days now, Lu Qianying is not back, which can be good, but Ye Wei is not back either. What could have happened!?' Lu Feng stopped his training, opened his eyes and kept glancing every five seconds at the Runic Badge he placed on his lap, refusing to be the first to get in contact as it might tip-off whomever captured Ye Wei.

Being in the blind was a torturous experience, every second was fueled with anxiety. Lu Feng grew nervous, his leg shook, there was nothing else for him to do than wait.

"The box's effect will wear off in six days. When Lu Ren's spirit flame is out, the Lu's will find out what happened..." Lu Feng muttered to himself, "I can't really just count on Ye Wei, it might be the time to give up on the Drakehead and just try to stay alive!"

'I will wait five more days, if I don't hear anything from Ye Wei by then I will leave the city with my father!' Lu Feng clenched his fist, 'and when I leave, I will spread the news regarding the Drakehead!'

"I will make your lives miserable! There are plenty of powerful people that can take over my revenge!" He glared at the Lu's office before making his way to his father's.

At the Drakehead, deep down the pond.

Ye Wei was protected by the second Supernova evolution, he gritted his teeth, enduring the crushing pressure and the extreme temperature as he looked at the green-glowing palace nine hundred feet away.

Ye Wei thought about entering the palace but the intense freezing surges of energy emitted by the palace were stopping him from doing so.

“Zoom! Zoom!”

The cold surges penetrated Ye Wei’s body, reached deep into his bones, pressuring the runes and altering their shape.

Besides a small amount of runes on his skull, all the runes on Ye Wei’s skeleton had transformed into yin yang shapes.

He lusted for power and paddled himself closer to the palace in hopes that he would therefore reach the third Supernova Evolution quicker, which would give him a returned prime Warrior’s strength.

‘Just a bit closer!’ Ye Wei struck a long stroke against the cold water, even though he felt his joints frosting up, he just kept going.

The numbing pain dampened his senses and awareness, Ye Wei only realized his second Supernova evolution was wearing off when he was about to run out of Qi.

He would freeze to death without the stance and he did not have the strength or time to return to the surface.

As the amplification stance wore off, Ye Wei found it increasingly harder to move his body. The ice on him was only getting thicker, constricting him tighter.

‘My life cannot end here!’ He used his last strength to paddle closer to the palace, closed his eyes and used the Falling Star form to flood his system with primal energy. He channeled the rush to his head, forcefully transforming the runes.

“Bang!”

With the third Supernova Evolution, Ye Wei's Falling Star form quickly transformed the surrounding energy to his own.

'Only if I had this kind of strength when I had to fight Lu Qianying...' Ye Wei was feeling euphoric but also regretful.

"Swoosh!"

Ye Wei jumped out of the water, leaving ripples on the pond surface.

"Shit, am I too late?" Ye Wei just realized he hadn't contacted Lu Feng since he started dealing with Lu Qianying. He quickly took the Runic Badge out of his interspatial bag.

"I really hope you didn't do anything stupid..." Aware that his partner was not at all cool-headed, Ye Wei frowned, realizing how his lack of communication could easily be interpreted as his death.

In Ye Wei's head, the situation regarding the Drakehead was already complicated enough as he saw how the royal family was close to the area; if Lu Feng was to spread the news, there was no doubt that a full scale battle will break out.

Fortunately, Ye Wei was able to get in contact with Lu Feng, they quickly caught up through the Runic Badge. He learned that his partner was not far from setting up the diversion, to put his escape plan in motion.

"Did Lu Qianying die?" Ye Wei was eager to find out what happened in battle within the North Barren Mountains when he was cultivating.

"The elder? He did not die, but he was gravely injured when he was sent back to base..." Lu Feng paused, feeling confused and anxious, "Did you... Did you give him the injuries?"

"No it wasn't me." Ye Wei shook his head, suspecting that the royal squad must have gotten out of the battle alive and managed to rescue the Lu elder. "Do you know what happened, did he say anything?"

Although Ye Wei sounded cautious, he now possessed the strength to challenge the elder if he was to use the third Supernova Evolution.

“Wait, if it wasn’t you, then who was it?” Lu Feng felt puzzled as Ye Wei left out the details of his recent venture.

“Demons and beasts were involved. I suspect that they are also searching for something in the area. We will have to be alert at all time from now on.” Ye Wei answered calmly.

“Lu Ren’s spirit flame will die in six days, at that time the Lu family will find out my involvement in sabotaging their expedition, they might even be able to extract images of you if one of the more experienced investigators decided to extract Lu Ren’s memories!” Lu Feng sounded concerned and angry.

“If we are going to be exposed anyway, I would like to somehow lead the demons and beasts to the Lu’s!” He was feeling under pressure, he knew that the Lu’s will be furious and that he would need to do a lot of work just to survive.

On the other hand Ye Wei was feeling less concerned. He knew too little about Lu Feng to care too much, to him the sole purpose of their partnership was about helping each other achieving a goal; he was worried for the Ye family but he knew that his connections could just save his life and get his family out of trouble this one time, if the Lu’s learned his involvement.

“The Qing state branch had confirmed you as the most recent addition to the Seven New Runes, the Lu’s won’t dare to touch you or your family even if your involvement had been exposed!” Lu Feng picked up on Ye Wei’s calm, becoming envious, “However they are known to be treacherous when dealing with their rivals, I would hire some guards if I were you!”

“Lu Feng, can you please hold your tongue about the Drakehead, give me two weeks, I will do what I can to keep the Lu’s busy while I think of a solution.” Ye Wei suggested in a solemn tone.

“Stick to your words! You might not have to worry about yourself but I do! I will go as far as I can just in case, which means I won’t be able to help you personally.” Lu Feng sighed, “I am telling you right here and

right now, if I feel pressured I will spread the news to keep them busy, away from chasing me!”

“When did I ever let you down? Two weeks, that’s all I ask for!” Ye Wei’s determined gaze was aimed right at Lu Feng.

“We will keep each other updated and share information...” Lu Feng’s voice was getting quieter. “I will have to prepare a couple of things before I leave.”

Lu Feng’s father, one of the three Runemasters based in Green Moon City, had been running his operations and business in the city for over a decade, leaving town was more than just packing and taking off for the father and son.

“Humpf!” Ye Wei put his badge back into his bag, relieved to hear his New Seven Rune status being confirmed. He was ready to matter into his hands now he knew nobody can openly harm him and his family.

Credits

Translator: [Gravity Tales](#)

Epub: [Shyboy](#) / [dotNOVEL](#)